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AUTHOR Crowley, William A.
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ABSTRACT

An "applied folklore" study investigated the value of certain aspects of folklore theory in an effort to upgrade teaching effectiveness. A case study approach was used to determine if the concept of labeling perspective, as adapted and advanced by folklorist Patrick B. Mullen (1988), could provide useful insights when applied to local character anecdotes and other occupational folklore of an experienced night school educator. Interview and other data obtained from a night school teacher/informant, classic and more recent presentations of the labeling perspective, other folklore research on local character anecdotes, and insights obtained from studies dealing with the folklore of education were reviewed. The community, the deviant, and the deviant's place within the community were described as the first step in analyzing the anecdotes. The past and present connections of students and teachers in the night school with the "day" education system of the community were traced. The impact of these connections on night school operations and folklore was determined. Through repeated applications during the study, the Mullen hypothesis was determined to be a valid tool for exploring group norms and identity in the context of the folklore of night school education. (A 53-page transcript of an interview with the teacher/informant and list of 24 references are appended.) (YLB)

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DEVIANCE, MORAL VOICES AND GROUP BOUNDARIES LABELING PERSPECTIVE AND THE OCCUPATIONAL FOLKLORE OF NIGHT SCHOOL EDUCATION

A Thesis

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the degree Master of Arts In the

Graduate School of The Ohio State University

by

William A. Crowley Jr, B.A., M.S.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University

1991

Master's Examination Committee:

Daniel R. Barnes

Patrick B. Mullen

Approved by

Daniel R Barnes

Advisor
English Department

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To Theresa

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VITA

July 4, 1949	Born - Brooklyn, New York
1970	B. A. Hunter College, New York City
1970-76	Librarian, Public Relations Representative, etc., New York Public Library
1974	M.S., School of Library Service, Columbia University, New York City
1976-1982	Consultant, Alabama Public Library Service, Montgomery, Alabama
1982-1986	Administrator, Northwest Indiana Area Library Services Authority, Merrillville, Indiana
1986	Administrator of Public Services, East Chicago Public Library, East Chicago, Indiana
1986 - Present	Deputy State Librarian for Library Services, State Library of Ohio, Columbus, Ohio

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

LABELING PERSPECTIVE AND THE MULLEN HYPOTHESIS

A REVIEW AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Education and Folklore

This work is an "applied folklore" study to determine the value of certain aspects of folklore theory in the effort to upgrade teaching effectiveness. Specifically, through a case study approach, it seeks to determine if the concept of labeling perspective--as adapted and advanced by folklorist Patrick B. Mullen (1988)--can provide useful insights when applied to local character anecdotes and other occupational folklore of an experienced night school educator.

Statement of the Problem

The field of education has been of long-standing interest to members of the folklore community. Folklorists have discussed the value of "school

children as informants" (Thompson, 1946, p. 408), or have reported that "stories about school-days are innumerable" while asserting that "as many as possible should be recorded" (Ó'Súilleábhain, 1963, p. 161). It can be safely advanced that the following instructions for data collection of O'Suilleabhain, first issued in the 1942 edition of A Handbook of Irish Folklore, will still produce excellent data when used as a guide:

> Give details of local schools: attendance (numbers) at various periods, "play-hour," "mitching" from school, school-hours, amusing incidents in school, entertainments and games of pupils, visits of inspectors and others (itinerant entertainers, parents, travelling-folk, etc.), holidays, closing of schools for other causes, examinations, last day spent at school. Give an account of school-discipline; write down stories connected with it. (p. 161)

More recently, practitioners such as Toelken (1979) and Workman (1979) have asserted a role for folklore in understanding and advancing the complex education process. It is an assertion mixed with caution. Toelken (1979) has reminded the unwary folklorist that "applied folklore can seem [to recipients of its advice] to be persuasive, avuncular, condescending, and didactic" (p. 353). Yet, even with such potential for misunderstanding, Kirshenblatt-

Gimblett, citing research by Hymes and Sutton-Smith, has advanced the case for involvement:

> The approaches, methods, concerns, and insights of folkloristics have special diagnostic value for understanding the culture of the classroom and the aesthetic development of children. . . . Insights gleaned from a folkloristic examination of these areas can provide a basis for designing more effective teaching strategies. (p. 18)

The natural affinity between folklore and education has also been noted by Patrick B. Mullen: "A teacher's techniques are largely verbal & interactive thus directly suggesting folklore" (P. B. Mullen, personal communication, November 1990).

In bringing folklore findings to education, it is important to stress a sense of the tentative. A folklore hypothesis applied to an education problem inevitably requires discretion in its use. Conditions vary among schools, even within the same system. The case for appropriate caution has been made by Georges (1969) in a now classic formulation:

> As long as investigators are consciously aware of the conceptual schemes underlying their analyses of story meaning and significance, there is little danger of their conceiving of such inferences as anything more than working hypotheses. But frequently the inferences drawn by one investigator from data gathered in one society and analyzed in terms of a specific conceptual scheme are accepted a priori by other investigators, who then use their own data from entirely different societies to corroborate what

> they conceive to be proven facts rather than to test what are nothing more than working hypotheses. (p. 325)

Although Georges' authoritative injunction sets boundaries to theory transportability, it specifically authorizes the use of a working assumption for analytical purposes. The Texas Gulf Coast fishing society where Mullen first applied his labeling hypothesis to local character anecdotes differs in many ways from the community of the teacher-informant who contributed her occupational folklore to this work. Still, Mullen's Gulf Coast study has become a model, what Ives (1988) has termed "the best consideration of local character yarns I have yet seen" (p. 21). Implicit in terming any intellectual construction as "best," is a challenge to apply the findings in another context. By definition, both Texas and the Midwest partake of the broad concepts implied by the term "American culture." If it can be demonstrated that each utilizes local character anecdotes to mark violations of community norms, a range of applicability beyond the Texas Gulf Coast for the Mullen hypothesis will have been discerned. At this point a review of both the labeling perspective and its derivative Mullen hypothesis is in order.

Labeling Perspective

A reading of I Heard the Old Fishermen Say: Folklore of the Texas Gulf Coast (Mullen, 1988, p. 113-129) clearly indicates the intellectual debt of the author to Edwin M. Schur in the development of Mullen's own labeling concepts. Labeling Deviant Behavior: Its Sociological Implications, the 1971 Schur work cited by Mullen, provides a definition of "labeling" which is still useful after two decades:

> Research and writing by sociologists identified with what has come to be called the "labeling school" stress the ways in which deviance is "created" through processes of social definition and rule making, through processes of interaction with individuals and organizations, including agents and agencies of social control, that affect the development of deviant self-concepts among individual rule-breakers. (p. 3)

Schur, of course, was not the only early exponent of labeling. Cavender (1991) summarized "two of the central theoretical tenets of the labeling perspective" (p. 318) by authors whose contributions Schur (1971) has also identified. As Cavender notes in his 1991 review of labeling concepts:

> Erikson (1962: 308) argued that behavior was not deviant in and of itself; rather it was defined as deviant by a social audience. Kitsuse (1962: 248) argued that we should study the process

> whereby some people come to be defined as deviant by others. (Cavender, p. 318)

Although the labeling perspective was influential during the 1960s, a number of its proponents produced substandard work (Cavender, 1991, p. 324) and thereby lowered the theory's repute. In consequence, as Cavender pointed out, labeling "was downgraded from a theory to a perspective, and by the late 1970s, even as a perspective it had lost much of its appeal. Of course, the perspective did not disappear" (p. 324).

Although Cavender (1991) credits the labeling perspective with informing "related sociological approaches" such as phenomenology and ethnomethodology (p. 324), it is possible that the downgrading of the theory impacted its appeal within the folklore community. Whatever the cause, the labeling perspective does not appear to be a frequently utilized intellectual tool within folkloristics. As Mullen's I Heard the Old Fishermen Say has been cited as one of the two reasons "the year 1978 was an important one for the study of occupational folklore" (Santino, 1988, p. 103) greater use of the labeling perspective within folklore research might have been expected.

Mullen Hypothesis

The Mullen hypothesis seemingly evolved out of its author's efforts to satisfactorily analyze Texas Gulf Coast local character anecdotes. Given Mullen's critical indebtedness to an approach which has not achieved a widespread folklore following, a thorough analysis of his reasoning in the use of labeling concepts is appropriate.

The first point to be made is that Mullen was apparently trying to discern a satisfactory method for explaining the role of local character anecdotes in the communities which give them birth. The category of local character anecdotes exhibits the same definition problems as the legal concept of obscenity, i. e., it's hard to define but one may know it when one sees/hears it. As Mullen (1988) observes, "In fact, folklorists have not been able to satisfactorily classify local character anecdotes" (p. 115). Nonetheless, through references to observations by such researchers as Herbert Halpert and Sandra Stahl, he pieces together a mosaic of definition:

> Linda Dégh defines the more general term anecdote so that a local character story would fit into it: "The Anecdote characterizes a person, a

> memorable event, or a place through a representative personal episode. . . ." Later in the same article she discusses the development of "current narratives," "informal and spontaneous stories growing out of everyday experiences" which seem to be replacing traditional genres (5). "These true stories grow out of reminiscences of the past, and events, hearsay, rumor, gossip, and personal experiences of the present" (6). This description fits the kinds of local character anecdotes which are currently being collected. (pp. 115-16)

In adapting labeling theory for use in folklore analysis, Mullen relies heavily on insights obtained through his study of what may be termed the "Mac and Harvey Taylor Story Cycle" of local character anecdotes (pp. 117-29). In this process he makes several crucial assertions which will be utilized in this work's analysis of education-related local character anecdotes. Such assertions include:

> Local character anecdotes are part of the oral tradition of a community and reveal more about society's reaction to deviance than about the deviant. . . . The telling of stories about deviant persons is part of the labeling process. One of the most important points in labeling theory is that the social group creates deviance "by making the rules, whose infraction constitutes deviance," and then labeling the rule-breakers as outsiders (14). This has implications for the study of local character anecdotes. . . . It is in the breaking of norms that the character is considered an appropriate subject for anecdotes. . . . We must understand the function of the deviant within the community before we can understand the narratives about the deviant. (pp. 116-17)

At the risk of oversimplification, the thrust of Mullen's analysis may be restated thus: local character anecdotes, inevitably concerning social deviants, incorporate rules through which a given community defines itself. The telling of local character anecdotes--which demonstrate a violation of community norms--is part of the process through which these norms are reinforced and community identity retained. Local character anecdotes told about in-group deviants enable members of a community to associate themselves with values represented by the deviants while allowing them to distance themselves from the actual behavior.

Mullen is specific in how his conception of the role of the local character anecdote is to be applied: "The first step in analyzing the anecdotes, then, is to describe the community, the deviant, and the deviant's place within the community" (p. 117).

In other words, Mullen calls for a description of the broad context within which the stories are told.

CHAPTER II

"IT'S CALLED 'ADULT EDUCATION'"

THE CONTEXT FOR NIGHT SCHOOL OCCUPATIONAL FOLKLORE IN MIDWEST CITY

Midwest City

The environs of Midwest City (pseudonym) contain all the elements of a major metropolitan region. Although Midwest City is extensive in area, there exist a number of local jurisdictions with the usual central city-suburb disputes occurring on a regular basis. The population of the Midwest City metropolitan area reflects America's immigrant heritage, although the WASP segment is extensive and retains considerable influence. A significant factor in the area's population is the large number of minorities and first and second generation migrants from both the state's rural areas and from adjacent southern states. Considerable employment opportunities are offered by government units and the private manufacturing and

service sector. The area's large numbers of academic institutions, including a major state university, attract a considerable number of students.

The area suffers from a significant drop-out rate among high school students within many of its numerous and independent school systems. However, only Midwest City and its working class suburb of Brighton (pseudonym) offer significant programs of night-school study leading to a regular high school diploma or to the equivalent G. E. D. certificate. Sandra (Sandy) Ellen Lewis (pseudonym), the informant who agreed to be interviewed for this study, teaches in the Brighton night-school in addition to her full-time employment with a government unit. Sandy has been teaching in the Brighton program for fifteen years.

For a group to possess shared mores the members must, consciously or unconsciously, act as part of the group. As described by Mullen's informant Tom Bates, the residents of the Gulf Coast community of Bayport and the surrounding area have a concept of themselves as "'beach people' who are different from outsiders, people from large towns or cities" (p. 118). Additionally, a large proportion of local residents were reported as having settled in the Bayport area

simply to survive. As Mullen notes: "During the Great Depression, the beach was thought of as a last resort for the unemployed" (p. 118).

This concept of Bayport residents as members of a distinctive group, a group formed, in part, through choice and adversity, finds its echo in the self-concept of night-school students and the reality of their non-traditional school attendance.

The School and the Teacher

According to Lewis, the Brighton "Adult Education" or "night school" program offers all courses required for a regular, i. e., "day" high school diploma during evening hours. With the exception of the program director, classes are taught by part-time faculty. All teachers possess the appropriate state certification. Most are also employed by Brighton or another school system during the day. In the fall of 1990 eight teachers were conducting evening classes in high school subject areas required for the award of a diploma. A typical night school class contains approximately 20 students, although class size does vary. Some courses, such as Speech, routinely attract less students than the

program average.

At the time of the October 20, 1990 interview, Sandra Ellen Lewis was 44 years old and had taught night school for fifteen years. She is still teaching at the time of this writing. During the day Lewis was and is employed as a manager with a unit of Midwest government. Lewis was born and raised in Bakersville (pseudonym), a small Midwestern town in the southern part of its state. Settled by migrants from the Kentucky and West Virginia hill country, Bakersville maintains strong "mountain" ties. According to Lewis many area families have relatives still living in Kentucky and West Virginia and frequently visit these states. (S. E. Lewis, personal communication, February 15, 1991)

This work is particularly dependent on the night school occupational folklore supplied by Sandra Ellen Lewis. As will be evidenced, Lewis's stories have been viewed through lenses provided by a range of researchers, including Pajak and Blase (1984) and Borman, Mueninghoff & Piazza (1988), as well as Johnson (1989)--the author of a "how to teach" handbook. Nevertheless, it remains true that Lewis was the only informant interviewed, even though she

offered (See Appendix) to set up a meeting for her interviewer with the head of the night school program.

There are several justifications for this self-imposed limitation. The most pertinent deal with the purpose of this work. Lewis, a gifted raconteur, provided enough narratives to expand a thesis into a dissertation. Many of the transcribed stories (See Appendix) are of real value in the study of the occupational folklore of a night school teacher. However, they did not directly apply to analysis of the Mullen hypothesis, with its application of the labeling perspective to local character anecdotes, in the night school context. In consequence, Lewis's accounts of battered girls, wives who lie to husbands about attending night school, football teams, gay teachers, and racial prejudice have been left for later analysis.

The Students

Lewis's own words convey the variety of students who are enrolled in her night school English and Speech classes:

> Crowley: Well, what are the types of kids, or young adults who generally go to, ah, to night

school?
Lewis: It's a real mix. From very upper class students to ahm, to the lower class. In Midwest City the suburbs have a real class distinction to 'em. And, you get this, generally the same types of kids from the same schools. And even though the background is different in one way, it really isn't different in another way. Ah, Eastchester kids will come in, these kids have money, they're driving Porche [sic].
Crowley: (Whistle)
Lewis: But they don't have an English credit they need to graduate.
Crowley: Um. (Inaudible)
Lewis: You get kids from Bridgeville, which is rural, Oaktown very rural, very poor. Same blue jeans every night. Ah, same thing. They've missed an English credit. Missed it for the same reason as the kids in Eastchester. They didn't play whatever game it took in the regular school. They didn't go with the regular standards of the school. And the philosophy. They didn't get along. And so they flunked it or in, in some cases they dropped out totally.
Crowley: Now, when we've been talking in the past you mentioned that, frequently, some of your students will be, well, the girls will be pregnant.
Lewis: Um hm. Ahm, I'm down to, I only have one pregnancy this semester. Last September when I started seven girls in the class, all seven, were pregnant.
Crowley: All seven?
Lewis: All seven were pregnant.
Crowley: How large was the class?
Lewis: About twenty.

A number of the facts and observations provided by Lewis have implications for the application of the Mullen hypothesis. Lewis's rich collection of stories contains a number of what Mullen has termed "narratives about the deviant" (p. 117). Whether they are classified as personal experience narratives,

occupational folklore, or local character anecdotes, these narratives frequently label an individual or group. As will be shown the stories related by Lewis are persuasive that the general rules of night school accept a greater range of student behavior from in-group deviants than the rules of a "day" public or private high school. It will further be seen that the rules enforced by Lewis within her classroom are even more liberal than night school as a whole. Nonetheless, these stories clearly show that both the night school program and Lewis as an individual teacher formulate and apply rules--sometimes overlapping, sometimes divergent--which label certain behaviors as undesirable, even aberrant, and those who carry out such behaviors as deviant either within or without classroom boundaries.

Classroom boundaries assume particular importance in the folklore of Midwest City night school. Living throughout the metropolitan area, Lewis's students lack the geographic cohesion of Mullen's self-acknowledged "'beach people'" (p. 118). Lewis perceives a class, consisting of teacher and students, as a developing group which grows together, to some degree, over a semester or year (S. E. Lewis, personal

communication, February 15, 1991). In the case of Speech, a class which induces strong fear in some students, she actively employes techniques designed to develop shared understanding and mutual support among her students:

> Lewis: . . . . What I do if it's a large group.
> Crowley: Yeah.
> Lewis: Is that I divide 'em into small groups of four.
> Crowley: OK.
> Lewis: And they spend a couple of classes talking to each other and getting to know each other. Because most of these kids don't know each other when they come in. It's not like a regular school where you got the same twenty or thirty-five kids that have been in classes together, you know, ten or twelve years.
> Crowley: Yeah.
> Lewis: Ahm. These kids, if they know two other people in the room, that's max.

A particularly intriguing facet of Lewis's narratives--the contextual nature of labeling--is discussed in Mullen's I Heard the Old Fishermen Say (1988, p. 129). However, the binary division of groups, "'beach people' who are different from outsiders, people from large towns or cities" (p. 118) in the Gulf Coast beach community where Mullen applied his hypothesis, facilitated use of the labeling perspective. Applying the Mullen hypothesis at the level of complexity demanded by Lewis's tales of night school, may require modification of Mullen's

pioneer use of labeling in folkloristic analysis.

Howard S. Becker (1963), as Mullen indicates (pp. 116, 177), is a source for certain of the labeling concepts which Mullen adapted and applied in his Texas Gulf Coast study. In his work Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance, Becker explains the voluntary nature of rule enforcement. His description may be utilized to shed analytical light in a number of instances where rules are expected to be enforced. In this case, it will be employed to explain how an individual teacher can accept a greater range of student behavior than is generally tolerated by her employing night school system or by the day high schools which initially labeled many of her students as unacceptably deviant.

> Specific rules find their beginnings in those vague and generalized statements of preference social scientists often call values. . . . (pp. 129-30) Since values can furnish only a general guide to action and are not useful in deciding on courses of action in concrete situations, people develop specific rules more closely tied to the realities of everyday life. Values provide the major premises from which specific rules are deduced. . . . (p. 131) But the natural history of a rule does not end with the deduction of a specific rule from a general value. The specific rule has still to be applied in particular instances to particular people. It must receive its final embodiment in particular acts of enforcement. (p. 133)

The matter of differential rule enforcement--and resulting discrepancies in the labeling of deviants--may be illustrated though analysis of a number of Lewis's stories (See Chapter III: "Stories About Educational and Other Deviants"). These accounts generally refer to young adults who come into her class having already been labeled as out of group "deviant" through one or more formal actions taken by their "day" school systems, the "normal" educational institutions of Midwest City society. To this end a short review of the deviance labeling process of Midwest City school systems is appropriate.

Characteristics of the "Deviant" Student

Lewis has already been quoted as observing that her classes generally attract students "who don't have an English credit they need to graduate." Within this context it is possible for students to be in night school for numerous reasons, some without a deviant label. For example, Lewis has spoken of relatively small numbers of middle-class black students, generally transfers from large public to smaller private high schools, who are occasionally found in her otherwise white classes. These students are in

good standing with their "day" schools. Their use of the Brighton night program may follow a transfer to a private high school and discovery that another course is required for graduation:

> Lewis: This is based on a very small experiences. But they're coming out better than their white counterparts in inner city schools.
> Crowley: The, the blacks in the private schools? The Catholic schools?
> Lewis: My question is, "Are we going to have a generation where we have significantly better educated blacks than white?" Which I think is a first.
> Crowley: Interesting. It is.
> Lewis: Because these kids are going on to big schools or private schools.
> Crowley: Because they just wanted to take, to make up a class?
> Lewis: Because they've got the educational background and their parents--which are in that, that very small, affluent black subculture--can afford to send them to the schools. They've got the background from their own private education for (Inaudible) in our society.
> Crowley: And they're?
> Lewis: I don't know how big this is but if it's happening in Midwest City with the desegregation it's gotta be happening (Inaudible)
> Crowley: And they happen to be in your adult education class at night just to make up a credit or so?
> Lewis: Yeah. Ah, when they transfer, sometimes because the, of the difference in the curriculum, they've had to pick up something here or there.
> Crowley: They generally haven't flunked anything?
> Lewis: No. The other thing sometimes is, ah, because the, the size. They've been closed out of classes. And they need a, they're willing to take extra classes in night school as well as go full-time day so they can graduate on time.

> And they'll take the credit. So they haven't flunked, just pickin' up extra.

Lewis's depiction of highly motivated black students who carry a full day program while making up technical deficiencies at night is clearly labeling. It also offers the possibility of extending the Mullen hypothesis. Stories about black, middle class students reveal them to be, in effect, "in-group deviants." These students attend night school without slackening, if only temporarily, their primary allegiance to day school. As stories from Lewis indicate (See Chapter III), a <u>true</u> night school student has been labeled, through the official stories of day school teachers and administrators, as temporarily or permanently set apart from normal high school life. These same stories reveal a further distinction along the lines of a student's sex. For reasons directly related to the behavior which led to being labeled as deviant, young men in Lewis's stories appear more likely than young women to find night school as their only opportunity to obtain a high school diploma instead of permanently dropping out or obtaining the G. E. D. equivalent.

Students Born to Be Labeled

Many of Lewis's night school students are of "mountain" stock. Significantly, their presence in night school can be directly related to living by Appalachian cultural values:

> Crowley: What's the, ah. You, you mentioned the age would be, ahm, seventeen to twenty. What's the sort of the racial mix of your classes?
> Lewis: Primarily white.
> Crowley: Primarily white. (Pause) Would they be kids who grew up locally or who moved into the area?
> Lewis: Local. Yeah. Now most of them are local but there is a lot that their parents are from ah, West Virginia, Kentucky, and have moved into the area. So they talk about going to see grandma and grandpa and it's back in the hills.
> Crowley: OK. So they still have that connection then? .
> Lewis: Um hm.
> Crowley: Just as an aside, do you find that they have some hill beliefs that have occasion to pop up in class?
> Lewis: Yeah. Some much stronger than others. Um. I've got enough relationship to the hills that I can recognize, ah, phrases they come up with. Ah, if they, I ask them where something is--and one that comes to mind is--"Well, it's just down the road a piece." Ah, I'm used to that from my background but not too many people in Midwest City, as natives, give "Down the road a piece."
> Crowley: Or "Over yonder."
> Lewis: "Three miles," Yeah. And, ah, and they admire this life too. Most of them want to grow up, get enough money to go to Kentucky or West Virginia where grandma and grandpa live and, ah, build a house and live there. They don't like the city life. They go back there

> on summer vacations. They've had experiences as, as smaller children with their par, with their parents going down there. And that's what they love.

Borman, Mueninghoff and Piazza (1988) address the adaptability of rural Appalachian culture to modern urban life through an analysis involving "reliance on literary sources and single-case ethnographic studies" (p. 231). In "Urban Appalachian Girls and Young Women: Bowing to No One" they reported equally strong influences of "mountain" culture among residents of urban Ohio Appalachian communities:

> Despite the frequently successful experiences of many Appalachian families, feelings of displacement continue to be deep-rooted. The pull of the mountains and family left behind represents a strong force in the conflict between mountain and urban values. (p. 236). . . . Children who are raised in urban settings frequently return to their mountain homes where members of their families still live. Thus, family and Appalachian tradition overwhelmingly influence the young child growing up. (p. 237)

In the Borman, Mueninghoff and Piazza presentation, based on their own findings and those of other researchers, are additional characteristics which work against success in school by the Appalachian children. These include parental hope that children can somehow obtain a high school diploma without becoming studious or giving up "an active engagement with life" (p. 237). And the explanation

that: "Most parents seemed unwilling to see their children sacrifice a sense of adventure, individualism, and independence. It is not surprising that conformity and passivity, norms of school life, appeared distasteful to most" (p. 238).

Viewed in the context of the Mullen hypothesis and its emphasis on labeling stories as a means of maintaining community identity, the dilemma facing some Appalachian students enrolled in Lewis's classes seems to be a decision over the culture i.e., Appalachian or American majority, from which to be deviant. These findings resonate with one of Lewis's descriptions of the "individualism" and "independence" behind the departure of her core night-school students from day school.

> Lewis: . . . . Most of the kids that drop out and come back, come back within two years of, of their drop-out. So they're nineteen, twenty, that age. Working full-time and ah, and saying, "It was stupid to ever drop out." Every one of 'em say it. Some dropped out as close to three weeks from graduation.
> Crowley: That close?
> Lewis: And they lose their whole year of credit so they have a year to do.
> Crowley: Did you find that the students are--say compared to an average high school student--are more intelligent or just more committed or what?
> Lewis: I think they're more intelligent. Ahm, and the problem is they're free thinkers. They

> have asked too many questions in a traditional classroom setting. And in many cases they made waves. Every teacher doesn't know everything in the world but, unfortunately, some think they do. And these kids have asked questions and not believed every thing the teacher said. And that sets up a conflict with the teacher.
>
> Lewis: What did you...
>
> Lewis: And the administration. Ahm, these kids would challenge the rules. (Pause) And the system. And, so they get in all sorts of trouble, most of which--in a real, in a real life situation--they're minimal. But when you put 'em in the, the world of education and the rules and regs that are developed in there, they've committed mortal sins according to administration. And so they throw them out many times. That's what happened to the kids that, that, ahm, drop out six and three weeks before graduation. They've had a, it's been a discipline problem and the principal's kicked them out and they've said, "To hell with it, I quit." And so I think they're, they're the ones who think they're not the sheep.

An already cited description by Lewis of seven pregnant girls in a night school class exemplifies additional problems which Appalachian culture places on its teen-age girls. Summarizing Cincinnati studies involving the neighborhood of Lower Price Hill, Borman, Mueninghoff and Piazza (1988) reported:

> Two aspects of female cultural identity in the urban Appalachian milieu of Lower Price Hill compete against the formation of a commitment to stay in school for many girls and young women. The first is gaining the status and recognition of male peers by "becoming a woman." (p. 242)

The investigators go on to note that "becoming a woman" in Lower Price Hill is tied to bearing a child.

"As long as girls persist in the student role, by the standards of their male peers, they remain girls" (p. 242). In addition to spotlighting this negative labeling of female students, Borman, Mueninghoff and Piazza also isolated the cultural rule that education for an Appalachian girl represents turning her back on community values--which are held to be identical to "street values" (p. 243). By continuing in school girls are seen as "aligning" themselves with the "colonizers, those who exploit the labor and resources of rural and urban Appalachians" (p. 243).

The impact of Appalachian-like values on the teenagers taught by Lewis, e. g., an inclination towards pregnancy to achieve "woman" status, dropping out to avoid collaboration with an oppressive, anti-Appalachian system, etc., were described in various portions of her interview. Nonetheless, it would have been a near-impossibility for Lewis to encounter within her classroom, for which enrollment is voluntary, students who were both Appalachian females and totally confirmed in their culture's opposition to education. From Lewis's remarks it was clear that the out-of-wedlock pregnancies of her female students were labeled and treated as "out of group" deviant for

their day school groups by the day representatives for education of the majority American or Midwest City culture. Yet such labeling was insufficient to divorce these teenagers from other aspects of that same majority culture. The traditional American emphasis on financial gain propelled the young mothers and mothers-to-be to continue their education through a school willing to admit them to its "group" for the classes required for the diploma necessary to get better jobs.

Schooling for pregnant Appalachian women represents a particularly complex example of labeling. It also demonstrates that an individual, during the same period of time, may be differently labeled by the various groups in which he or she has, has had, or seeks to have--or to avoid--membership. For example, schooling is "out of group deviant" for Appalachian street culture while pregnancy is "in-group" and acceptable by the same group norms, according to data reported by Borman, Mueninghoff and Piazza (1988). The same pregnancy is "out of group deviant" in terms of the values of day schools which will not let pregnant students continue in class to complete the education these schools otherwise encourage. However,

the pregnancy itself is, at worst, "in-group deviant" and thus acceptable in terms of the Brighton night school program from which the pregnant student can either graduate or transfer credits earned while she is pregnant back to day school.

Schur (1971) has addressed this complication in its more "political" form:

> It is most significant sociologically - and even to some extent recognized in everyday life - that various forms of behavior are simultaneously viewed by some members of a society as "deviant" and by others as "political" or "social" movements. That such definitions can coexist, each with a certain amount of social force, is a major reason why it is impossible to settle on a neat, mutually exclusive classification. A most useful point to keep in mind, actually, is that, whenever the legitimacy of specific norms is explicitly challenged, we find a struggle between those who seek to define the issue as political (as a clash between social movements) and those who seek to define it as one of individual deviance (as wrongdoing, sickness, and the like). Such struggles do not have clear-cut starting and stopping points, and they do not produce unalterable outcomes. It is in the very nature of the struggle that the relative strengths of competing definitions are constantly shifting. (p. 109-10)

The "simultaneous" labeling of some pregnant students as "out of group deviant" by day school authorities and "in-group deviant" or even "non-deviant" by their night school counterparts, can change over a period of time. The resulting alterations in group status is described by Lewis in

the following transcript excerpts:

> Crowley: Oh my. Now, are most of these girls still living at home? Or are they on their own? Living with a boyfriend?
> Lewis: Most of 'em are still living at home. Ahm, they come from lower middle class. Values, for the most part are pretty middle class. Ah, parents have been upset, are shocked. In some cases parents force 'em to get married. A mistake from, from what I've seen. In some cases the parents let them choose. If they're going to keep the baby, they'll help 'em raise it.
> Crowley: And do they go to night school because they can no longer go to day school? Or do they go to night school to finish the, the high school degree? Or?
> Lewis: It's, in a couple of cases the schools won't let 'em go to regular day school pregnant.
> Crowley: They won't?
> Lewis: But they, they will accept the credits if they go to night school. So they can get the credits from our night school and then transfer them back to their school. And they can graduate with their class. Usually the girls were juniors and seniors. Some will go to night school through the pregnancy and have it, the class, ah the credits, transferred back. And the following year, after the baby's born, they'll go back into day school and graduate with their class. Mom or grandma will baby-sit.

To a certain extent the "deviant/political" problems inherent for social scientists in the simultaneous labeling phenomenon do not hamper a folkloristic analysis. Although the discipline is receptive to understanding a community's power relationships through a knowledge of its folklore, it

also understands that groups of all types tend to establish their own rules for existence within whatever external constraints may apply. In this context Mullen's argument that the "telling of stories about deviant persons is part of the labeling process" (p. 116) implies several questions pertinent to labeling analysis: "Within what group are the stories told?," "Who are the stories told about?," "How does the telling of such stories affect the group which tells the stories?," and "What impact does the telling of stories have on the individual(s) they are told about?"

Variants of these questions have been addressed by proponents of the labeling perspective. As Cavender notes:

> These theorists were more concerned with the definitional process wherein an act or a person comes to be defined socially as criminal or deviant. The deviant label resulted from a definitional process wherein some members of society interpret certain behavior as deviant, define as deviant the people who perform that behavior, and then respond to them as deviants (Kitsuse, 1962: 248). (Cavender, p. 318)

Cavender's restatement seems to precisely outline the process though which the former day schools of Lewis's pupils went about writing the official

"stories" which led to the students being expelled or dropping out.

The Official "Story" - How And Why Schools Label

Schools are organizations and Schur (1971) has emphasized that "organizations produce deviants" (p. 82). School systems are also record-keeping bureaucracies which extensively--if selectively--chart the educational life histories of their students. In the process they create "narratives" which convey information having positive or negative consequences for the "subject" of the stories.

Shuman (1986) has observed: "Stories categorize experience. The relationship between stories and experience is always problematic and can be stated in many ways" (p. 20). This reminder of the subjectivity involved in the recounting and recording of activities has implications for conflict within the school context. In Midwest City and environs, for example, teachers with experiences promoting the value of conformity in education routinely confront the non-conforming behavior of Appalachian students operating from the framework of a culture rooted in

"individualism." The narrative or official records of such encounters, written by the teacher or another employee of the school, may be expected to place differential weight on the worth of the values held by teacher and student.

This privileging of middle class culture is potentially unfair to students with different life experiences. Toelken (1979), drawing on stories provided by Native American informants, has asserted that "ignoring or denigrating the student's traditions" hampers learning while increasing the "explosive" nature of a multicultural classroom (pp. 355-359). Heightening classroom tension is far from desirable since school, in the view of some researchers, is already a battle ground.

Becker's 1983 analysis of "Willard Waller's classic, The Sociology of Teaching" (p. 99), has encapsulated the essential problem of conflict inherent in any school with a required attendance policy:

> He [Waller] said that children did not want to go to school and that adults forced them to, so that the natural state of social relations in the school was conflict. That seems obviously true, today, as then, and yet the people who take that statement and its implications seriously . . . still create controversy. (p. 99)

Waller himself was somewhat less diplomatic than Becker and characterized the school as "a despotism in a state of perilous equilibrium . . . threatened from within and exposed to regulation and interference from without" (p. 10).

This original description of the inherent educational conflict alluded to by Becker is worth repeating:

> To understand the political structure of the school we must know that the school is organized on the authority principle and that that authority is constantly threatened. The authority of the school executives and the teachers is in unremitting danger from: (1) The students. (2) Parents. (3) The school board. (4) Each other. (5) Hangers-on and marginal members of the group. (6) Alumni. The members of these groups, since they threaten his authority, are to some extent the natural enemies of the person who represents and lives by authority. The difficulties of the teacher or school executive in maintaining authority are greatly increased by the low social standing of the teaching profession and its general disrepute in the community at large. There is a constant interaction between the elements of the authoritative system; the school is continually threatened because it is autocratic, and it has to be autocratic because it is threatened. The antagonistic forces are balanced in that ever-fickle equilibrium which is discipline. (pp. 10-11)

Waller's 1932 analysis of school as a threatened and defensive institution has been confirmed on a periodic basis--although generally with much less

memorable imagery--by such studies as Blase (1985) (pp. 249-50) and Pajak & Blase (1984) (p. 169). It is implicit and occasionally explicit in practical teaching manuals such as Johnson's Into the Heart of Teaching (1989) where certain teaching realities are underlined:

> Everyone who has taken educational methods courses in a college or university has heard a statement about being tough during the first several weeks of school in order to get the students' attention and to set the tone for classroom standards for the entire year. That statement is partly true. I think the word "determined" rather than the word "tough" might be more accurate. (p. 49)

Being an authoritarian institution seeking to contain conflict through the imposition of discipline and the enforcement of organizational expectations by teachers and principals, the school system has developed appropriate procedures for describing student adherence to rules. These include grading, taking attendance, issuing passes and imposing sanctions for non-adherence to school policies. Johnson (1989) has described several of the written narratives which officially record the story of student educational life. First there is the "Plan Book-Register":

> At the beginning of the school year, each teacher is given a most important book . . . the "Plan Book-Register." The first half of the book is for recording each day's planned activities and for listing what actually occurred in each class including all assignments given. The second half of the book, the register, is for keeping records of student grades and student absences. (p. 33)

As a medium of control the "Plan Book-Register" is fairly innocuous. The records of the teacher's planned activities may include more work than a class might prefer but study within a known curriculum implies a certain level of instructor objectivity. A greater possibility for labeling students is inferred from the book's other functions, listing student grades and attendance records. Nonetheless, as a "narrative" the "Plan Book-Register," in theory, offers a teacher equal opportunities for recording positive and negative student stories.

Employment of another official document, the "office referral form," is another occasion for crafting a story of student deviance. As Johnson describes the form:

> The office referral form, or any other similarly-named form, is the basis of a communication system used between teachers and administrators. Teachers submit referral forms to administrators to report disciplinary problems; but there is more, teachers are requesting enforcement of a portion of the school's disciplinary code. (p.

95)

Over an academic career the accumulation of grades, records of attendance, and the presence or lack of "office referral forms" help constitute the official stories on whether students meet or fail to meet school expectations. Baring school leaving or dismissal caused by pregnancy, commission of a crime, an out of district move, etc., it is this cumulative narrative which determines whether a student will graduate from high school or will be separated from schooling before he or she earns a diploma.

These official stories, which define the acceptable within the "school social group," are arguably a form of "local character anecdote." Many would appear to fit a Mullen description (1988)--slightly amended--of character anecdote attributes:

> The character anecdote is based on actual incidents of deviant [student] behavior which are observed and then put into narrative form [office referral form] by the observer [teacher] or someone [principal] who hears the incident from the observer. Thus, the stories arise and are circulated during the lifetime [K through 12 academic career] of their subject, but they continue to be told long after the eccentric character [student] dies or leaves the community. (p. 117)

According to Lewis "deviant" students form "the more interesting part" of her classes (S. E. Lewis,

personal communication, February 15, 1991). These students, who arrive "on stage" in Lewis's classes officially labeled as "non-acceptably deviant" in terms of their day school community, provide Lewis with the best of her "Stories About Educational and Other Deviants" (Chapter III).

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CHAPTER III

STORIES ABOUT EDUCATIONAL AND OTHER DEVIANTS

Crowley/Lewis Interview

The interview with Sandy Ellen Lewis took place on Saturday, October 20, 1990 from 12:30 p. m. to 2:30 p. m. in the living room of her house, located in an integrated, working/middle class neighborhood of Midwest City. The house's furnishings, antique wood in nature, reflected both Sandy's country origins and interests. In the living room itself were a rocker, chair, stuffed chair, sofa, four lamps, other antiques and a floor rug. Various tables and book cases were filled with cat reproductions or statuettes, all given to Sandy by friends or students. Also present were two cats. The first cat, a sixteen and a half year-old male named Archie, was on Sandy's lap while she was sitting in her chair during most of the interview.

The second cat, named Rocco, shared the couch with the interviewer for most of the session. Both cats were extensively petted. Sandy's chair and the interviewer's couch were set at ninety degree angles to each other. Two cassette recorders were used and the tapes periodically changed. The interview was interrupted once by a neighbor's son wanting to borrow a power tool. It was restarted twice after "false" endings--when Sandy recollected additional information--before concluding. The day was sunny and the interview pleasant and collaborative.

During the session Sandy's tone of voice was, by turns, conversational, witty, and concerned. Her emotions were most engaged when she discussed a growing pattern of abuse of her female students by the males in their lives.

In the past, Lewis has shared a number of night-school stories with her interviewer. The stories to be analyzed are typical of those Sandy tells friends over lunch or during office conversations at her full-time day job. These circumstances, as well as private social occasions, are the most probable times when Lewis, a raconteur of some note, is likely to share her stories. Due to the limited hours available and

the frequent staff turnover, the eight teachers of the various subjects offered in Brighton night school do not share stories on a regular basis.

Stories of Drug Use

A number of the anecdotes and observations drawn from Lewis's night school classes are revealing of the extent to which "substances" or drugs affect the lives of her students. The sheer magnitude of the drug problem in her high school classes would seem unbelievable were it not corroborated by other experienced teachers such as Johnson (1989).

As Johnson has stressed in a summary which almost seems to be a prose litany of the problem:

> Substance abuse is generally defined as an excessive and uncontrollable use of alcohol and/or drugs (prescription and illegal). The problem of substance abuse and the problems created by that abuse are enormous in American public schools. I have seen far too many young people ruin their lives through substance abuse. Schools have failed in many attempts to educate young people about the dangers of substance abuse. In many cases, I believe that teachers are woefully unprepared to recognize and deal with the problem of student substance abuse. (pp. 187-88)

Although Johnson reprints the "physical and emotional symptoms which may indicate substance abuse in young people" by James C. Dobson (p. 188), her

summary of the topic reveals a seeming "moral ambiguity" over values with implications for folkloristic labeling analysis. Illicit use of alcohol and other drugs is condemned but the student-user is not thereby outside of the school community. Johnson's caution about dealing with student substance abuse--as opposed to student drug dealing--reflects concern and, by implication, "in-group deviant" status for the user: "It is important to remember that the goal in identifying students involved in substance abuse should not be to punish them but to assist them in dealing with their problems and overcoming their addiction" (p. 189).

Johnson, the teacher-author, relates an incident --helpful to understanding Lewis's narratives--where she tried to assist a student who was discovered using drugs only ten days before graduation. Afraid that reporting the incident would prevent the student from receiving his diploma, Johnson initially decided to aid the teenager "without going through the proper school channels." She thereby encountered difficulty "because he [the student] did not want my help" and was forced to turn to the principal who was able "to enroll the student in a counseling program." Although

the student was allowed to graduate with his class, he soon left treatment. Johnson was "happy" that the student graduated but she later concluded that officially recognizing the problem through an immediate report to the principal would have been the preferred approach. (p. 189)

> Looking back on that situation I believe the student would have been better served had I gone directly to the principal at the very beginning of the problem. . . . From this experience I realized how unprepared I was to deal with a student's substance abuse problem. I simply did not have the authority, resources, or ability to deal with the situation. (p. 189)

Johnson's revised view of this incident may have been connected with a change in perspective accompanying her rise from high school social studies teacher to member of the school district's Board of Education (p. viii). What does seem evident is a switch in priorities. To Johnson, safeguarding the health of a student drug user is now more important than her past concern that the student receive his diploma.

A case can be made that both of Johnson's stances are played out in the approach Lewis brings to classes composed, to a large extent, of deviants <u>from</u> day school who may well be in-group deviants <u>in</u> the night

school context.

Jim the Drug Dealer

Lewis's interview provided a number of local character anecdotes and observations concerning the in and out of class behavior of "Jim the Drug Dealer" (pseudonym). Jim, in common with Lewis's other students, is not permitted to deal or use drugs in the classroom. Nonetheless, as the transcript excerpt given below demonstrates, Lewis regularly confronts a drug culture against which she and the night school have erected certain, if somewhat tenuous, boundaries.

Crowley: OK. Ahm, You, you mentioned drugs. Are, are drugs a problem in the classes you teach? Or not?

Lewis: Not within the classes. The kids are sharp enough to know they're gonna get into trouble quick if the, if the drugs are seen in the classrooms. So they're sharp enough and slick enough that they deal with this out of their car. And they come in, if they get a group together, they might be in the car. Or, after class, they go to the car and then leave the school, usually in the vehicle. Some will come in high, sporadically or maybe on a regular basis. But it's rare that they're of a violent nature that you can't deal with it.

Crowley: How do you deal with it when they come in high?

Lewis: It depends on the personality because drugs hit everybody differently. Ah, some are just giggling and in a real good mood. And you just laugh it off a little bit, and they're, they don't really do a lot of work but they don't really disrupt things too much. They

know that I'm not going to get up, uptight. They learn that real fast and so they just kind of enjoy watching the class through this, ah, funny little window they're lookin' through at the time. They don't cause too much trouble.

Crowley: So you really hold them to do their requirements for the class and if they come in high, as long as they're performing you, you kind of let it slide?

Lewis: Yeah. The fact that they're just there, ah, is good. I mean--they're still dedicated. Even if they're high, they're still going to make it to class. That says something in [sic] them.

Lewis's description of student drug use before and after class is based on deduction, experience and hints gathered from second-hand, confidential accounts from students (S. E. Lewis, personal communication, February 15, 1991). As this narrative lacks the specificity sought be Degh and quoted by Mullen (1988) regarding a "person, a memorable event, or a place" (p. 115), it will not be discussed as a representative local character anecdote. However, in her account Lewis does offer considerable insight regarding the labeling of students as deviant from or within the larger night school community and in the groups which constitute her classes.

Student drug users "get into trouble quick. . . if the drugs are seen in the classrooms." "Trouble" in this context refers to separation from night school and the possibility of police involvement (S. E.

Lewis, personal communication, February 15, 1991). Either expulsion alone or expulsion with criminal law consequences would result in labeling a student as too "deviant" to be a part of the class and school community. However, Lewis does set more lenient conditions for group membership than other night school teachers. Although she teaches to the curriculum, requires up to 34 written assignments per semester (two per week for 17 weeks), and enforces the school's policies on required attendance, Lewis admits to being "unconventional and liberal" with some suspected drug use. As long as Lewis has no concrete proof--and student drug use is non-disruptive to class operations--she will retain the perpetrators as "in-group deviants" and not take action which could lead to expulsion (S. E. Lewis, personal communication, February 15, 1991).

Behind Lewis's demands for student adherence to the "objective" criteria of attendance and written assignments, and her reporting only drug behavior she actually witnesses, can be seen a deliberate effort to maintain class cohesion through, where possible, labeling students as "in-group" rather than "out of group" deviants. This approach to the enforcement of

night school norms has, it turns out, positive educational consequences. Lewis estimates that seventeen out of twenty, or 85% of the students in an average one of her classes, go on to receive their high school diploma. She believes this to be a higher rate than maintained by teachers whose night school classes mirror in their tight structure the more traditional classes they teach during the day (S. E. Lewis, personal communication, February 15, 1991).

Lewis's willingness to define class/group boundaries to thus include, rather than exclude, the discrete drug user results in part from her observations that these potentially deviant students frequently possess compensating personal qualities. A local character anecdote from one of Lewis's Speech classes, involving both "Jim the Drug Dealer" and a "Learning Disabled" student, was related by her to illustrate the positive qualities of Jim, a self-admitted criminal.

> Lewis: Yeah. Ahm. It's a little bit weird. Just fascinating. Cause every time this kid comes into class he surprises me. I mean I know he's bright and.
> Crowley: Hm hm.
> Lewis: And everything. And a good personality. Ahm. The other thing. I have one girl in class who is, ah. She's an LD student.

Crowley: OK. Learning disabled.
Lewis: And. Learning disabled. She's twenty-one.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: She's a recovering alcoholic.
Crowley: Um hm.
Lewis: Been dry for about a year. And she's trying very hard to get a high school diploma. She works in housekeeping in one of the local hospitals.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: Mopping floors and what-not. And really is trying very hard. Is, is pretty disabled. Ah. I don't know if she's gonna get a diploma or not. I don't know.
Crowley: OK.
Lewis: If she has it. Tries very, very hard. Is there early, stays late and works hard. So she's in Speech class.
Crowley: Yeah.
Lewis: And ah. She gave a speech. This is a small group this time so they aren't subdivided. But she was in there with, with Jim and two other boys that are OK kind of kids. Kind of an older brothers. A little rowdy but.
Crowley: Yeah.
Lewis: Not bad. Basically nice kids. Ahm. And she got up to give her speech and it wasn't too badly done.
Crowley: Yeah.
Lewis: She gave it a good shot for the first time. Very nervous, very scared. And when the boys gave these speeches they heckled each other.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: And I didn't say anything but was prepared to shoot 'em in the back if I had to.
Crowley: Yeah.
Lewis: Because this girl had never given a speech before. She was terrified. She was physically shaking. She'd, she was holding the podium and it was shaking. And they sat there very quietly through the whole thing. And when she was done they applauded.
Crowley: That's great.
Lewis: And Jim was telling her what a good job she was, was doing. So these kids have real good stuff in 'em.
Crowley: Yeah.

Lewis: You have to admire them for that. And Jim especially. When she sat down he went over and sat next to her. And told her what, what she did good and how she need to improve on this. And how he was gonna help her. This was out of the blue. This kid has no reason to do anything.
Crowley: That's great.
Lewis: So that's why you're willing to, to deal with 'em when they, they might not be doing other things they're supposed to.
Crowley: Cause their good side comes out.
Lewis: Cause you see the good side of 'em, right.

An air of the unreal is suggested, and contradictory expectations are somehow raised, through a local character anecdote told to emphasize a caring, empathetic, and disinterested response to human suffering--"this kid has no reason to do anything"--on the part of a drug dealer. And Lewis is convinced that Jim makes an extraordinarily good living selling drugs, so much so that it interferes with his schooling. As she reports elsewhere in her interview:

Lewis:. . . . Part of his problem [why Jim doesn't graduate from night school]--well he doesn't see it as a problem, it's just a, ahm, a career conflict--is because of Jim's drug, drug-dealing.
Crowley: (Laughter) A drug dealer?
Lewis: And so he does enough deals the first few weeks in September and October. Then he takes off, usually for California or the mountains in Colorado. Something like that. Or to Florida for the winter. And ah.
Crowley: So he's only in your class then for?
Lewis: For a couple of weeks. Now this semester he's come back. And Jim's twenty-two at this point.

Inasmuch as the narrative about Jim and the LD student depicts him in a socially approved act of kindness, questions may be raised as to whether the story is a true local character anecdote. However, when considered in the context of Jim's ongoing career as a drug dealer, the narrative appears to take on the characteristics of what Tye (1989) has termed "explanatory anecdotes." In Tye's formulation these are stories that "help justify the character's presence within the community" (p. 191) and which convey the belief that "the character is not what he or she may initially appear" (p. 195).

On the surface Lewis's refusal to exclude a self-confessed drug dealer from membership in her class/group echoes Johnson's valuation of the worth of a high school diploma. As noted earlier Johnson (1989) was willing to ignore school rules to insure that a student substance abuser would graduate with his class. Yet Johnson clearly breaks with Lewis on whether or not a drug dealer can be considered to be a part of the school group. Even allowing that Lewis has never caught Jim selling drugs (S. E. Lewis, personal communication, February 15, 1991), the difference in Lewis's high valuation of "Jim the Drug Dealer" and

Johnson's animosity towards "drug dealers" is profound. As Johnson writes:

> I believe the most dangerous students found within the school are the ones who are selling drugs. These students are a very real threat to all other students. Many young people who would normally avoid drug involvement are pressured into drug use at their schools. . . . Teachers should report all suspected drug dealing activities to the proper school authorities; those school authorities should fully investigate any reports received from teachers and call in the police when necessary. . . . If and when teachers report suspected drug dealings, they should clearly state all reasons for their suspicions and deliver the report to the designated building administrator as quickly as possible. (pp. 189-90)

Given the opposition of the night school and Lewis to drug dealing and use within the classrooms, the question arises as to why Lewis does not terminate "Jim the Drug Dealer's" class membership and thereby lessen his contacts with her other students. Lewis, with the appropriate administrative safeguards, clearly has the ability to end that status, if only by "clamping down" on Jim or withholding a passing grade.

Becker (1963) has already been cited to note that "the specific rule has still to be applied in particular instances to particular people" (p. 133). Yet observations on process inevitably lead to a search for the reasons for differential rule

enforcement. The key to understanding Jim's ability to remain as an in-group deviant as long as he abides by Lewis's "objective criteria" (homework, attendance, no observed drug activity, etc.) may well lie in his ability to serve as a symbolic expression of certain "values and norms" (Mullen, 1988, p. 129) which Lewis seeks to encourage.

From her interview Lewis, the proximate judge of group/class membership, clearly values Jim's intelligence and his demonstrated ability to empathize with and support the efforts of a struggling "Learning Disabled" student. Lewis's awareness of Jim's abilities is a continuing theme. As she has remarked:

> Jim's a real businessman. And if this kid had a different setting, there is no doubt in my mind he would be in college--Harvard, Princeton, something like that.

Lewis has already been quoted on her overall belief that night school students are "more intelligent" than their day-school counterparts (Chapter II). Her valuation of Jim's mental abilities, while evident, does not appear to be the only reason for overlooking his means of livelihood to maintain group membership. From Lewis's story, it appears that Jim's limited immunity from non-group labeling and

possible expulsion may lie in her perception of his willingness to empathize with and support others. The concept of a drug dealer who "cares" being rewarded for his concern with "in-group deviant" status raises the prospect that differing moral values capable of mitigating Lewis's distaste for drug dealing (S. E. Lewis, personal communication, February 15, 1991) are affecting the process of deviant labeling in her classroom.

Research by Gilligan and others (Gilligan, Ward, Taylor & Bardige, 1988) on different "moral voices" is informative when the labeling perspective is used to help determine a "particular community's values and norms" (Mullen, 1988, p. 129). For Gilligan (1988), these varying moral stances "signaled different ways of thinking about what constitutes a moral problem and how such problems can be addressed or solved" (p. xvii). This distinction is helpful in understanding Lewis's willingness to maintain Jim's in-group deviant status. Differences in moral voices, as described by Gilligan, appear to have direct bearing on why Lewis's is unwilling to expel Jim from her classes:

> Two [moral] voices draw attention to the fact that a <u>story</u> [emphasis added] can be told from different angles and a situation seen in

> different lights. Like ambiguous figure perception where the same picture can be seen as a vase or as two faces, the basic elements of moral judgment--self, others, and the relationship between them--can be organized in different ways, depending on how "relationship" is imagined or construed. From the perspective of someone seeking or loving justice [emphasis added], relationships are organized in terms of equality, symbolized by the balancing of scales. Moral concerns focus on problems of oppression, problems stemming from inequality, and the moral ideal is one of reciprocity or equal respect. From the perspective of someone seeking or valuing care [emphasis added], relationship connotes responsiveness or engagement, a resiliency of connection that is symbolized by a network or web. Moral concerns focus on problems of detachment, on disconnection or abandonment or indifference, and the moral idea is one of attention and response. Since all relationships can be characterized both in terms of equality and in terms of attachment or connection, all relationships--public and private--can be seen in two ways and spoken of in two sets of terms. By adopting one or another moral voice or standpoint, people can highlight problems that are associated with different kinds of vulnerability--to oppression or to abandonment--and focus attention on different types of concern. (pp. xvii-xviii)

Through his in-class "responsiveness" to the pain of a handicapped fellow student Jim, in front of Lewis, demonstrated what are apparently compensating personal qualities. To Lewis, these qualities are why: "You're willing to, to deal with 'em [accord "in-group" deviant status] when they, they might not be doing other things they're supposed to [stop selling drugs]."

The second "Jim the Drug Pusher" local character anecdote may also be seen as a proverbial tale. According to Lewis it was first told by Jim when he came late to class and she let him explain about a fruitless search for naked women in a bar.

> Lewis: . . . . Ah, it's just a sharp kid. Last year when he [Jim] was in speech - for a couple of weeks -and I wanted them to give ahm, a convincing type of speech, he convinced everyone that they should buy "Made in the USA" drugs. And keep out the foreign, the South American drug dealers, because they were breaking down the American economy. But American drugs was helping the American economy.
> Crowley: (Inaudible)
> Lewis: He convinced me.
> Crowley and Lewis: (Laughter)
> Crowley: I won't pursue that.
> Lewis: Ahm. Then this year Jim came in and, ah, Jim turned twenty-two last week.
> Crowley: Ah ha.
> Lewis: So of course when he came into class he was in no mood to be in Speech class. He'd already had partied for a while. And his eyes were already glazed over. I can, I know Jim well enough that I know he's high because he gets this strange little smile on his face.
> Crowley: Ah ha.
> Lewis: And a, Jim was smiling. I know Jim was high, too high to do any work. But that was all right. Jim has had Speech classes before and gets As in speeches. He knows exactly what to do. And one night he got up to do a five minute speech and got carried away and talked for an hour. The other kids were just amazed but he was making sense so I let him go. He wanted to get it off his chest anyway. But Jim came in one night, and a couple of weeks ago, of course, he was twenty-one so he can get in anywhere. He was just really upset. He'd been off to a bar, on the North End, that he'd heard advertised--and people had told him about--and

there were supposedly naked women there.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: Well, if Jim had thought a bit, you don't get naked women and alcohol in the same place. It's against the law.
Crowley: Yeah.
Lewis: So they wouldn't have been totally naked. And he got in there--a four dollar cover charge just to top things off. So he had already made an investment. In his eyes. He even used those terms, "I invested four dollars. And these women weren't naked. They had on bathing suits."
Crowley: (Laughter)
Lewis: "They were wearing bikinis." I said, "Well Jim, they wouldn't be naked if they sold alcohol." I said "How was (pause) everything else?" He said, "The beer was real cheap, it didn't cost anything for the beer." He said, "But the women weren't naked." And I said, "Jim you just got to learn. It's a rough life out there. You just can't get cheap beer and naked women in the same place."
Crowley: (Laughter)
Lewis: He said, "I guess you're right. I just can't do it."
Crowley: Ah.
Lewis: But he was real upset. So he was off on his twenty-second birthday to look for naked women. To heck with the cheap beer. He was willing to spring even more than four dollars for a naked woman.

Before analyzing the application of the Mullen hypothesis to the analysis of what might be called the "Cheap Beer and Naked Women Anecdote," a close examination of the "unusual" context in which the story was first related is appropriate. Jim told his story fresh from a bar in the middle of class. Rather than being viewed as a student seizing control of the class narrative, this incident might profitably be

seen as simply another use of one of Lewis's favorite teaching techniques. In Lewis own words:

> Crowley: Do, are uhm, do teachers ever lose control of their classes in the night school?
> Lewis: Just me.
> Crowley: Just you? (Laughter)
> Lewis: Just me. The other ones are pretty hard-nosed teachers and, and they, they stay in control of 'em most of the time. The classes are fairly small. Ahm, I lose control usually 'cause I want to.

Lewis allows her students to tell their personal experience anecdotes, to bring their own narratives to class discussions. In effect she accords them what Dell Hymes in "A Narrative View of the World" - his part of the joint article written with Courtney Cazden - has termed "the right to unite position and personal experience in public" (Cazden & Hymes, 1978, p. 33). Her reasons were for this educational approach are made clear in the following passage:

> Crowley: You've obviously enjoyed working with these students.
> Lewis: I do. I enjoy it very much. It, it keeps a perspective from what I do during the day.
> Crowley: It gives you a perspective. What else do you get from it?
> Lewis: Well, there's a sense of accomplishment. Because ah, they do learn something. Ahm. Some not as much as others. Of course there's a whole (Pause).
> Crowley: Ah ha.
> Lewis: Spectrum of what they learn. But they do learn things. Ahm. And I think sometimes if they don't really learn the contents of the course, sometimes I'm the first adult that has

sat down to talk to 'em.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: And they learn maybe they don't have to mistrust everybody in the world. People will listen to 'em. That what they say is worth listening to. Many of 'em don't feel that anything they say or think has any worth. Because up to this point no one's ever listened to 'em. And so if nothing else, if I've provided someone, some other human being for these kids to listen to, ah. I feel I've accomplished something for them. And made an impact.

Given Lewis's aim, in essence, of sharing the right to use narrative in her classroom with her students, analysis of what Mullen (1988) has called the "positive and negative elements" (p. 121) of local character anecdote can become complicated. The "Cheap Beer and Naked Women" tale is illustrative of this problem.

Tye's insights have already been utilized in discussing the first "Jim the Drug Dealer" story as an "explanatory anecdote." In Tye's analytical framework, the "Cheap Beer and Naked Women" narrative might well qualify as an "exploratory anecdote," since it explores "characters' personalities and lifestyles" (1989, p.191).

Ives (1988), following "Mullen's lead," discusses a "continuum" where anecdotes depict individuals with various degrees of "character" and "hero" qualities

(p. 21). In Ives's model:

> The character is someone to whom the narrator--and the listeners--can feel comfortably superior; his or her actions are told about with anything from amusement to contempt to (occasionally) disgust (36). . . . At the other end of the continuum is the folk hero, someone whose deeds inspire awe, respect, even wonder (p. 21).

Jim seems to be a type of hero in the story where he assists the LD student with her fearsome assignment for Speech. In his drunken search for a naked women through the world of cheap beer, he becomes a source of "amusement" and much more the character. Yet even as Ives's insights are applied, there seems to be a problem in his character-hero continuum which lessens its usefulness with night school and its occupational folklore. Ives's formulation appears to be more appropriate to "folk-hero legend"--where anecdotes have a certain "age"--than to folklore stories which may be as recent as Lewis's latest class. To slightly modify another of Ives's formulations, "Jim the Drug Dealer" remains a combination of "protohero" (1988, p. 27) and "protocharacter" who is still living, acting, and generating anecdotes in his defining place and time. In this context Mullen's identification of "positive and negative elements" (1988, p. 121) may well be more useful for current stories than Ives's

more exciting--yet somehow time-bound--approach.

In analyzing Jim's adventures, the matter of Lewis allowing him to discuss women in the context of their naked body parts cannot be overlooked. A recent national poll commissioned by the American Association of University Women has stressed the fact that "teachers are important role models for young women" (Greenberg-Lake, 1991, p. 11). Lewis is aware of herself as a role model and allowing the reinforcement of sexist stereotypes in her class on this occasion was untypical of her.

From Jim's position as an "in-group deviant," being able to recount this or any personal experience in class was an affirmation of his group status. As noted by Hymes:

> The narrative use of language. . . . is considered legitimate, a valid use of language in the service of knowledge, when it is used among co-members of a group.
>
> If the narrative function is excluded in an institutional setting, such as a college or school, the implication is that the students are defined as NOT co-members of a group with those who teach them. (Cazden & Hymes, 1978, p. 28)

When the Mullen hypotheses is informed by Hymes' observations regarding inclusive and exclusive rights to communicate through narrative, the labeling roles

of the "Cheap Beer and Naked Women" story are strongly suggested. Jim is an in-group deviant because he is allowed to tell his story. Because his stories are extreme examples of the accepted right of Lewis's students to share personal experiences, they are told to illustrate that right. In many ways the narratives recounted by Lewis position her class as comparable to the Texas Gulf Coast beach inhabited by the Taylor brothers. Contrasted with the classes taught by the other "pretty hard-nosed" night school teachers, Lewis's classroom is, within already related limits, "a nonconforming place" (Mullen, 1988, p. 124).

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Summarizing the "Process"

This study has explored the relevance to night school folklore of the Mullen hypothesis regarding local character anecdotes--and by implication related narratives--in defining and reinforcing community norms and identity. In doing so it has relied, in part, upon interview and other data obtained from a night school teacher/informant, classic and more recent presentations of the labeling perspective (formerly labeling theory), other folklore research on local character anecdotes, and insights obtained from the limited number of studies dealing with the folklore *of* education--as opposed to the many studies of folklore *in* education.

The past and present connections of both the students and teachers in the Brighton night school with the "day" education system of greater Midwest City has been traced. The impact of these connections on night school operations and folklore has been

determined to some extent, with assistance from such sources as ethnographic studies of Appalachian culture, a current teacher's handbook, and studies on the sociology of teaching.

Throughout the research for this study Mullen's reminder (1988) of folklorists' inability to "satisfactorily classify local character anecdotes" (p. 115) has been used as implicit license to broaden the folkloristic context for labeling. In the process of investigation and, in some aspects, exploration of apparently under-researched areas of folklore, attention has been paid to the roles of "stories" of all types in the labeling of students as "deviant." A working definition of "narrative" sufficiently broad to encompass formal records such as the "office referral form" (Johnson, 1989, pp. 95-96) has been utilized. Further the study has investigated the impact of these and other official school "narratives"--existing even if unseen/unheard by a researcher--in originally labeling a student as "out of group deviant" from his or her "day" high school. Utilizing informant data and other sources, the impact of such labeling and its possible role in bringing students into the Brighton night school program has

been examined.

Summarizing the Findings

Through repeated applications during this study the Mullen hypothesis has been determined to be a valid tool for exploring group norms and identity in the context of the folklore of night school education.

As restated earlier in this work the Mullen hypothesis can be understood as holding that:

> Local character anecdotes, inevitably concerning social deviants, incorporate rules through which a given community defines itself. The telling of local character anecdotes--which demonstrate a violation of community norms--is part of the process through which these norms are reinforced and community identity maintained. Local character anecdotes told about in-group deviants enable members of a community to associate themselves with values represented by the deviants while allowing them to distance themselves from the actual behavior.

Application of the Mullen hypothesis to the form of narrative from which it was developed--the local character anecdote--was undertaken to understand how several "Jim the Drug Dealer" stories help establish and maintain the boundaries of the "acceptable" in Sandra Ellen Lewis's night school classes. When analyzed, these anecdotes demonstrated the priority given to certain qualities within Lewis's classroom.

Such qualities included the willingness to meet the expectations of the night school program regarding assignments and attendance. Additionally, attributes such as intelligence and, even more valued by the teacher-informant, sensitivity to and connection with others, were deemed sufficient for Lewis to maintain Jim as an "in-group deviant." This status was continued despite admitted--if outside the classroom--criminal activity.

The Mullen hypothesis proved useful in analyzing the pre-night school career of a number of Lewis's students. The existence of "negative" local character anecdotes or, more properly, "negative" school narratives was highlighted by Lewis when she discussed how "day" school authorities labeled some of her students as out-of-group deviants for being "free thinkers" who "challenge the rules." The matter of the competing norms of different groups was underlined by another observation of the teacher-informant which labeled many day school "rules and regs" as "minimal" in importance, although school administrators viewed the breaking of such norms as "mortal sins."

Students who left or were permanently or temporarily driven from day school, along with

students who continued in day school but used the Brighton night school to make up classes, entered a program where certain norms were significantly different from those of other systems. Pregnancy, a condition inviting being labeled as a "temporarily" out-of-group deviant in day school could, and one semester did, involve all Lewis's female students. From Lewis's stories even being "high" on drugs was within classroom norms, so long as the actual use was not witnessed and the classroom not disrupted. However, as a teacher following a curriculum, Lewis required and enforced such standard "day" school norms as the completion of assignments and regular attendance by students.

Implications for Further Research

Becker (1983) has outlined the problems inherent in providing the school community with recommendations based on "qualitative" research ("Studying Urban Schools," pp. 100-108). At times caustic, often magisterial and frequently speculative, Becker portrays educators as: promising to teach every child through "standardized methods" or the "routinization of education that came with its growth as an

industry," justifying the inevitable failure to do so in terms of "objective, quantitative, scientific research" which "blamed the victim" as being uneducable, and desperately seeking to avoid charges of "favoritism, discrimination or racism" (pp. 101-104).

Defending the ethnographic research opposed by some educators as relying "on the sensitivities and seemingly unrestrained judgments of individual researchers" (p. 104), Becker stresses the validity of anthropological and sociological findings while simultaneously acknowledging that they may be difficult to implement:

> The understanding produced by our research and theory may be fine-grained and detailed enough to produce solutions, but not the ones that will meet the criteria that operate in the educational setting. What I mean is this: We often can see what is causing the trouble, why some technique of teaching or administration is having an effect exactly opposite to what people want and hope for. But what we see as the cause is not something the people who look to us for help can do anything about. Or, at least, they can only do something about it at some cost so great that they are not willing to pay it. (p. 107)

As a case in point Becker cites a study of a medical school where the faculty chose not to implement his study team's suggestions regarding the improvement of physician training. The recommendations

were time-intensive and the faculty members developed concerns about having enough hours left for their research and treatment of their own patients (pp. 107-108).

The concept of time as a scarce commodity within the teaching community offers, paradoxically, a suggested direction of research for the operation of the labeling perspective in folklore and for placing folklore in the service of education. To this end the hypothesis will be advanced that Sandra Ellen Lewis, as a part-time night school teacher with an "8 to 5" government job during the day, is not overworked by high school standards. Compared to her night school colleagues with day and night teaching responsibilities, Lewis has the time to be creative in her teaching. It is suggested that she thereby has less need than other teachers to label as "out of group deviant" the "more intelligent ... free thinkers ... who ask too many questions in a classroom setting" and thereby disrupt a teacher's time-saving routines.

And high school teachers do establish time-saving routines to deal with chronic overwork. Blase (1985), in reviewing the results of approximately 800 hours of "qualitative" data collections in two high schools,

involving observations, retrospective accounts by teachers and open-ended questionnaires (pp. 239-241), asserted the following:

> Teachers overall response to problems posed directly by the student, within the context of the school, consisted of a rationalization of classroom structure and processes [italics added]. Specifically, teachers adapted by organizing, structuring, routinizing, and simplifying instruction. Furthermore the finds suggest that the teachers became less creative, more traditional, and more authoritarian. They designed classroom experiences that emphasized well-defined objectives, clear evaluation criteria, easy questions, simple assignments, basic knowledge, and basic survival skills with practical relevance. This, more often than not, resulted in an emphasis on lower-order thinking skills and proper (student) social behavior. Consistently, teachers creative, personal, emotional, and intellectual involvement in instruction tended to decrease. (p. 243)

Based on her New York State experience Johnson (1989) estimates that the average high school teacher with five classes and 125 students is expected to grade a minimum of "seven thousand, five hundred" (7,500) papers per year (p. 88). Much of her handbook Into the Heart of Teaching consists of practical hints on such items as "scoring methods for objective answer sheets" with illustrations why using a "one stroke slash mark" for grading saves time over using "a check mark" or any other objective marking system (pp. 86-87). Her aim in teaching and for her readers is

virtually a gloss on Blase's findings:

> As the years passed and I had a family, my goal in teaching became more defined. Simply stated, my goal was to increase my skills and impact as a teacher while limiting time spent on teaching duties so that my job did not infringe so much on my family life (p. viii).

Lewis's night school associates are teaching classes in the evening when other teachers they work with during the day are grading papers or preparing assignments. In this context, Lewis's explanation of a differential willingness to listen to student narratives is significant:

> Crowley: Ah, are there any particular, er, you know, other stories that, that you hear from your students? That stick in your mind?
> Lewis: Umn. The thing that, one of the things that surprises me is the amount of information these kids will tell me about themselves. Ahm, regardless of the background, if, if it's the upper class, or the lower class, or the middle class. They're all looking for someone to listen to 'em.
> Crowley: Do most of the night school teachers, are they the type to listen?
> Lewis: I think more so than your regular ones. Some not as much as others. Again, if you've had kids all day at school and you've already done some listening, it might be a little harder. But if you're dealing with adults all day, as I am, hmn, you have patience to listen to 'em. Or at least I have the patience to listen to 'em.

Without making any claims for "day" school, there does seem to be the possibility of positive change in night school with only minimal disruption of existing

routines. Night school relies on part-time faculty to teach classes where many students have already been labeled, through official school narratives, as "out of group deviant." Additionally, as Lewis noted in her interview, night school has difficulty in retaining teachers. As she related, "They'll do it a couple of years and it just burns 'em out."

Objective classroom regulations regarding assignments, attendance, observed drug use, etc., are inforced by Lewis. Yet she apparently differs from many day and other night school teachers in according students the right to tell their narratives. These pupils according to the analysis of Lewis's local character anecdotes, exhibit a range of "in-group deviant behavior" which is extraordinary in comparison to what Lewis states is tolerated by teachers in day and other night school classes.

Lewis's belief that her approach produces higher rates of graduation might well be corroborated through investigation of night school programs which utilize both "day" teachers and former high school teachers with other "day" jobs. If greater willingness to hear student narratives and higher graduation rates are proven when "part-time educators" are used, a means of

improving night-school effectiveness may be discerned: Former educators presently in other occupations could become the prime recruiting pool to fill part-time, night school teaching positions.

With regard to education, folklore has a standing, if largely unheeded challenge from one of its own. In the words of Dell Hymes:

> Study of the interaction between ability and opportunity with respect to narrative experience is very much needed. The findings have a special bearing on education. Folklore has a special role to play in providing such findings. (Cazden & Hymes, 1978, p. 33)

Further studies of night school occupational folklore which address the effects of student labeling and the willingness of teachers to listen to student narratives, may produce data useful to educational effectiveness and thereby contribute to operational change. If so, then this present work, in a small way, has both met and extended Hymes' challenge while seeking to determine the continuing validity of the Mullen hypothesis.

APPENDIX

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

I. The Speech Community or Social Context

The environs of Midwest City (pseudonym) reflect all the elements of a major metropolitan region. Although Midwest City is extensive in area, there exist a number of local jurisdictions with the usual central city-suburb disputes occurring on a regular basis. The population of the Midwest City metropolitan area reflects America's immigrant heritage although the WASP segment is extensive and retains considerable influence. A significant factor in the area's population is the large number of minorities and first and second generation migrants from both the state's rural areas and from adjacent southern states. Considerable employment opportunities are offered by government units and the private manufacturing and service sector. The area's large number of academic institutions, including a major state university, attracts a considerable number of students.

The area suffers from a significant drop-out rate among high school students within many of its numerous and independent school systems. However, only Midwest City and its working class suburb of Brighton (pseudonym) offer significant programs of night-school study leading to a regular high school diploma or to the diploma-equivalent G. E. D. certificate. Sandra (Sandy) Ellen Lewis (pseudonym), the informant, teaches in the Brighton night-school in addition to her full-time employment as an administrator with a government unit. Sandy has been teaching in the Brighton program for fifteen years.

II. The Speech Event

The interview with Lewis, age forty-four, took place on Saturday, October 20, 1990 from 12:30 p. m. to 2:30 p. m. in the living room of her house, located in an integrated, working/middle class neighborhood of Midwest City. The walls of the house echo the previous owner's tastes since they were left as found when the house was purchased several years ago. However, the furnishings, antique wood in nature, reflect both Lewis's country origins and interests. In the living room itself were a rocker, chair, stuffed chair, sofa, four lamps, other antiques and a floor rug. Various tables and book cases were filled with cat reproductions or statuettes, all given to Sandy by friends or students. Also present were two cats. The first cat, a sixteen and a half year-old male named Archie, was on Sandy's lap while she was sitting in her chair during most of the interview. The second cat, named Rocco, shared the couch with the interviewer for most of the session. Both cats were extensively petted. Sandy's chair and the interviewer's couch were set at ninety degree angles to each other. Two cassette recorders were used and the tapes periodically changed. The interview was interrupted once by a neighbor's son wanting to borrow a power tool and was restarted twice after "false" endings--when Sandy recollected more information--before concluding. The day was sunny and the interview pleasant and collaborative.

During the session Sandy's tone of voice was, by turns, conversational, witty, and concerned. Her emotions were most engaged when she discussed a growing pattern of abuse of her female students by the males in their lives.

III. Transcript of October 20, 1990 Interview

Side One

[Sound of footsteps as Lewis returns to her living room carrying glasses of diet soda]

Crowley: This is a field interview with Sandy Lewis on the subject of adult night school education. Ah, Sandy, how did you first get involved in adult education?

Lewis: Actually, it started as a joke. A friend of mine's husband got a new job as director of a night school program in one of our suburban school districts. And, I laughingly said "Well, gee, I could have a second job here. I am a teacher." But I went ahead for a semester and took a, a course in one of the crafts programs because, at the time, there was a secondary program of, ah, crafts, cake decorating and those kinds of things. As well as a diploma-tract program. And spent a couple of evenings trying to do pottery, which was a disaster anyway. And he came in one, to class one night, kind of looking funny, and said "I, I need a substitute English Teacher. I can't find anybody. Can you come over and teach?" So I left the craft class and went over and taught the English class.

Crowley: Right out of the class, without any prep, and you were teaching the English class?

Lewis: Right! And, ah, it turned out that, um, the teacher had a long-term illness. So I finished off the semester with a literature class. Just a couple of kids and it, it wasn't any big deal, two nights a week. Didn't need to do a lot of prep, actually. And, un, and then things started to evolve and ah--teachers come and go for the most part quickly in this program.

Crowley: No kiddin?

Lewis: So, un, I went from one class two nights a week to two classes two nights a week to three classes which evolved into four nights a week.

Crowley: Why do many teachers tend to come and go a lot?

Lewis: Ah, this is an, aside job for anybody that's doing it. These are all certified teachers, Department of Ed, all that. They're usually doing it as well as teaching day school.
Crowley: Oh, OK.
Lewis: And they'll do it a couple of years and it just burns 'em out. And it's just too many kids, too much paper grading for anyone to stand for any length of time. And so they, they go for a couple of years and then say "This is it."
Crowley: Do the teachers have any feeling about the, the difference between day students and the teach, and the, ah, the night school students they're teaching?
Lewis: Hmn. In some cases there are because we've got a couple of teachers who do, like, junior high during the day. And, ah, so they see a difference in the kids. Actually, it's kind of an improvement for them for night school because there is a small level of intelligence, it's a little higher than the junior high. Some of the high school teachers that have the same thing day in and day out ahm, I don't think they see any difference. It's just more of the same. And some of those are the ones that go faster. They don't stay as long.
Crowley: About how many teachers are there in, in the night school group? (Pause) That, say, you, you work with?
Lewis: There's about eight of us.
Crowley: "They're eight of us?" Do you cover each other's classes or?
Lewis: Ahm, sometimes. But that's small because, ah, we've got one teacher that, one or two that do English, and they'll switch back and forth. And then you've got one that does math and one that does government, and one that does science, and, so rather by disciplines.
Crowley: Now, you're basically English and Speech then?
Lewis: Right.
Crowley: I can remember ah, oh, it would be a year or two ago, you told me a story about, ahm, one of your students who kind of had Fascist tendencies. But who kind of.
Lewis: Oh yeah. That was a kid last year whose, ah, whose idols were Rasputin, Hitler and, and, well that was it. He couldn't find anyone else who quite lived up to those two's level. Ah, he'd probably be

looking up to Hussein at this point but.
Crowley: Did he do a, ah, a speech on Adolf Hitler as a role model?
Lewis: (Pause) I'm trying to think. Ahm, it was Rasputin as a role model!
Crowley: OK.
Lewis: That was it. And he, ah, yeah, he thought that these were great guys and the only way you'd get anywhere in life was with, just knock everybody else out. Take over.
Crowley: Do you have students who are equally unique now? Or, other ones that you could tell me about?
Lewis: I've got one that comes and goes that's unique. This is Jim. Ah (inaudible). I've had Jim in English classes for about five years now. And Jim comes in for about three weeks--our semesters are seventeen weeks.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: And he comes in for three and does very good work. Ah, and then he stops coming. And Jim has been about half a credit away from a high school diploma for several years. Now remember, with our, our laws in (state) they keep increasing the number of credits you need. So as Jim keeps going toward his half credit he keeps going another half credit to a whole credit in the hole every year that he waits.
Crowley: Oh my.
Lewis: So unless he really makes an attempt and takes a lot of things at once, he's not going to graduate. Part of his problem--well he doesn't see it as a problem, it's just a, ahm, a career conflict--is because of Jim's drug, drug-dealing.
Crowley: (Laughter) A drug dealer?
Lewis: And so he does enough deals the first few weeks in September and October. Then he takes off, usually for California or the mountains in Colorado. Something like that. Or to Florida for the winter. And ah.
Crowley: So he's only in your class then for?
Lewis: For a couple of weeks. Now this semester he's come back. And Jim's twenty-two at this point.
Crowley: OK.
Lewis: When we started out he was sixteen, seventeen years old. And I tease him about that he'll be late for class some night because he'll be collecting his Social Security check on the way to class. If he keeps this up he's never gonna get out of here. But he came in this year and he's all motivated to stay

and get his diploma because his baby brother, at 18, graduated from high school and has a diploma before Jim does.

Crowley: Oh.

Lewis: So we got a little bit of an ego here. So there's some motivation to get his diploma. More the thing is Jim makes straight As. He's really, really intelligent. But his priority is not his diploma. Except now it's just ah, an ego thing with the big brother.

Crowley: OK. Ahm. You, you mentioned drugs. Are, are drugs a problem in the classes you teach? Or not?

Lewis: Not within the classes. The kids are sharp enough to know that they're gonna get into trouble quick if the, if the drugs are seen in the classrooms. So they're sharp enough and slick enough that they deal with this out of their car. And they come in, if they get a group together, they might be in the car. Or, after class, they go to the car and then leave the school, usually in the vehicle. Some will come in high, sporadically or maybe on a regular basis. But it's rare that they're of a violent nature that you can't deal with it.

Crowley: How do you deal with it when they come in high?

Lewis: It depends on the personality because drugs hit everybody differently. Ah, some are just giggling and in a real good mood. And you just laugh it off a little bit, and they're, they don't really do a lot of work but they don't really disrupt things too much. They know that I'm not going to get up, uptight. They learn that real fast and so they just kind of enjoy watching the class through this ah, funny little window they're lookin through at the time. They don't cause too much trouble.

Crowley: So you really hold them to do their requirements for the class and if they come in high, as long as they're performing you, you kind of let it slide?

Lewis: Yeah. The fact that they're just there, ah, is good. I mean--they're still dedicated. Even if they're high, they're still going to make it to class. That says something in [sic] them.

Crowley: Well, what are the types of kids, or young adults who generally go to, ah, to night school?

Lewis: It's a real mix. From very upper class students to ahm, to the lower class. In Midwest City the suburbs have a real class distinction to 'em.

And, you get this, generally the same types of kids from the same schools. And even though the background is different in one way, it really isn't different in another way. Ah, Eastchester kids will come in, these kids have money, they're driving Porsche [sic].

Crowley: (Whistle)

Lewis: But they don't have an English credit they need to graduate.

Crowley: Um. (Inaudible)

Lewis: You get kids from Bridgeville, which is rural, Oaktown, very rural, very poor. Same blue jeans every night. Ah, same thing. They've missed an English credit. Missed it for the same reason as the kids in Eastchester. They didn't play whatever game it took in the regular school. They didn't go with the regular standards of the school. And the philosophy. They didn't get along. And so they flunked it or in, in some cases they dropped out totally.

Crowley: Now, when we've been talking in the past you mentioned that, frequently, some of your students will be, well, the girls will be pregnant.

Lewis: Um hm. Ahm, I'm down to, I only have one pregnancy this semester. Last September when I started seven girls in the class, all seven, were pregnant.

Crowley: All seven?

Lewis: All seven were pregnant.

Crowley: How, how large was the class?

Lewis: About twenty.

Crowley: Oh my. Now, are most of these girls still living at home? Or are they on their own? Living with a boyfriend?

Lewis: Most of 'em are still living at home. Ahm, they come from lower middle class. Values, for the most part, are pretty middle class. Ah, parents have been upset, are shocked. In some cases parents force 'em to get married. A mistake from, from what I've seen. In some cases the parents let them choose. If they're going to keep the baby, they'll help 'em raise it.

Crowley: And do they go to night school because they can no longer go to day school? Or do they go to night school to finish the, the high school degree? Or?

Lewis: It's, in a couple of cases the schools won't let 'em go to regular day school pregnant.

Crowley: They won't?
Lewis: But they, they will accept the credits if they go to night school. So they can get the credits from our night school and then transfer them back to their school. And they can graduate with their class. Usually the girls were juniors and seniors. Some will go to night school through the pregnancy and have it, the class, ah the credits, transferred back. And the following year, after the baby's born, they'll go back into day school and graduate with their class. Mom or grandma will baby-sit.
Crowley: Boy. Um, on the, you, you mentioned something earlier, that you had Jim, who's a repeater. Do you have a lot of repeaters in your classes?
Lewis: Ahm. No. It's probably a third repeaters. We've got kids that are going through this program full-time to get their diploma from the night school.
Lewis: We're
Crowley: They are?
Lewis: We're certified, as part of the school system, to grant diplomas.
Crowley: What's it officially called anyway? Is it a night school, is it evening school?
Lewis: It's called "adult education."
Crowley: Adult education.
Lewis: These, most of the students are between the ages of seventeen and, say, twenty. So they won't--the term "adult" is, is loose.
Crowley: Did they have? Is there a minimum age they have to be for?
Lewis: No minimum. Maximum no. Sorry minimum. Yeah, they have to be sixteen.
Crowley: Be at least sixteen? But they can be there to any age. So you may have adults.
Lewis: Till one of us dies.
Crowley: One of us. How long have you been teaching there?
Lewis: Fifteen years.
Crowley: Fifteen years. In essence fifteen years at a, a second job.
Lewis: Un hmn.
(Cat movement)
Crowley: Cat's got her comments too.
Lewis: Yeah.
Crowley: Ah, are there any particular, er, you know, other stories that, that you hear from your students? That stick in your mind?
Lewis: Umn. The thing that, one of the things that

surprises me is the amount of information these kids will tell me about themselves. Ahm, regardless of the background if, if its the upper class, or the lower class, or the middle class. they're all looking for someone to listen to 'em.

Crowley: Do most of the night school teachers, are they the type to listen?

Lewis: I think more so than your regular ones. Some not as much as others. Again, if you've had kids all day at school and you've already done some listening, it might be a little harder. But, if you're dealing with adults all day, as I am, hmn, ahm, you have patience to listen to 'em. Or at last I have the patience to listen to 'em.

Crowley: What are some of the, ah, the stories that come immediately to mind?

Lewis: Ahm, I've got one, one little girl now. Ah, she's twenty but, but she's--some of these kids actually look undernourished. I think their background is enough that--they really didn't have a good home life--that they're healthy. Ahm, so she's, she's petite and a little thin. And fragile looking. And very quiet. And, ah, in one of her first compositions--I asked 'em to write about something that bugged 'em, something that bothered 'em. And she couldn't think of anyone. And I said "Now don't tell me that at, at twenty, you haven't run into a real skunk yet, that you've ever dated." And she just shook her head "Yes" and started writing away. And her story was that she, ah, met this guy that was so wonderful and she moved in with, with him. And at that point he started to, ah, well, besides beating her--he totally dominated her. And she couldn't do anything. She couldn't make any move. She had to be there. She couldn't go out unless she went out with him anywhere. He told her what to wear, what to eat. She got pregnant. He beat her while she was pregnant to the point where she miscarried.

Crowley: (Whistle)

Lewis: And then went home to, to live with her parents. With her mother. She hasn't mentioned a father. And, ahm, that was the first week of school.

Crowley: Ow.

Lewis: She told me this. She dropped out of school her senior year. Most of the kids that drop out and come back, come back within two years of, of their drop-out. So they're nineteen, twenty, that age. Working

full-time and ah, and saying, "It was stupid to ever drop out." Every one of 'em say it. Some dropped out as close to three weeks from graduation.

Crowley: That close?

Lewis: And they lose their whole year of credit so they have a year to do.

Crowley: Did you find that the students are--say compared to an average high school student--are more intelligent or less intelligent or just more committed or what?

Lewis: I think they're more intelligent. Ahm, and the problem is they're free thinkers. They have asked too many questions in a traditional classroom setting. And in many cases they've made waves. Every teacher doesn't know everything in the world but, unfortunately, some think they do. And these kids have asked questions and not believed every thing the teacher said. And that sets up a conflict with the teacher.

Crowley: What did you...

Lewis: And the administration. Ahm, these kids would challenge the rules. (Pause) And the system. And, so they get in all sorts of trouble, most of which--in a real, in a real life situation--they're minimal. But when you put 'em in the, the world of education and the rules and regs that are developed in there, they've committed mortal sins according to administration. And so they throw them out many times. That's what happened to the kids that, that ahm, drop out six and three weeks before graduation. They've had a, it's been a discipline problem and the principal's kicked them out and they've said, "To hell with it, I quit." And so I think they're, they're the ones who think they're not the sheep.

Crowley: Well, how do you? In your class, you obviously have to teach them certain things.

Lewis: Un hm.

Crowley: How do you deal with students who other teachers have not been able to deal with?

Lewis: So far I've had very few problems. Ah, some of it maybe I can't answer. One thing I set out real fast with them is "I don't lie to you. I'll tell you exactly what I think, what you need to do, and when you need to do it. And I expect the same from you." And you get--you almost don't have to tell 'em "I expect it." Once you're honest with them, they don't lie to you. Which I think is basic human nature. They'd never believed, believed the teachers before,

they've never trusted 'em. Or some of 'em. Maybe not all of 'em but enough of 'em that they were turned off to most of the school system. They just. They didn't think they were getting a fair deal. They didn't think they're, anyone's honest with them. And once they find out that you're honest and you treat them fairly, you can do anything with 'em.

Crowley: When you get 'em to do assignments, do you tend to find topics that are the most immediate in their lives? Or?

Lewis: I try to in some cases but in others, just by virtue of the subject, you have to go on a little bit with the traditional things. And they'll moan and groan but you say, "Look, you know, everything isn't wonderful in life. You've, you've got to suffer. These are the things you have to do. Make the best of it."

Crowley: How do they relate to writers like Shakespeare or some of the classics that everyone has to grind through in high school?

Lewis: Uhm. In some cases they're, ahm, they like 'em real well. Once they can get through the language barrier--which is everybody's problem with Shakespeare--ahm, they realize that they've already heard these stories over and over. And then kind of admire this guy "Ah, he's the one that started this whole mess." And so, ahm, and some of have already gone into this on their own. I had a student of literature one year--ahm, the other interesting thing about these people, you don't pre-judge 'em--this kid was a biker. In his leather jacket and his motorcycle boots and his long hair. And of course to the establishment, even today, long hair, uhm, sets up a type. You know, it's stereotypical. And I gave out the literature assignments of what to read, and its's usually a cross of twentieth century American writers.

Crowley: Un hm.

Lewis: Hemingway, Steinbeck, Updike, those kind. And this kid came up to me after class and said, "Can I read some of the things on my own?" Usually they want to read Stephen King. Or science fiction. Which isn't all bad but I don't want 'em to read a whole semester of it. So I usually say, "Yeah, you can read one of your own choice. Anything you want." This kid wanted to read John Milton. It was his favorite author.

Crowley: Milton?

Lewis: Milton.
Crowley: A biker who liked Milton.
Lewis: And so I said, "Sure." This kid also listened to, ah, Tchaikovsky when he did his homework. Not heavy metal.
Crowley: And he was living as a biker?
Lewis: And living as a biker.
Crowley: Wow.
Lewis: So that's one thing I've learned. You don't pre-judge (pause) people based on how they look. I mean we--our society--does that all the time. To the hilt. We all do that. That's part of our life but you don't do it.
Crowley: Now I gather then you're teaching basically what grade? Junior year, senior year? The two of 'em?
Lewis: Yeah. Junior-senior English is what I'm teaching.
Crowley: OK. Are there any, uhm, if you give then, say an assignment of, you know, "Write About What Your Summer Was Like." Do you give them those kinds of assignments?
Lewis: I don't do summer because I'm afraid of the result. (Laughter) In some cases. But, yeah, I try to do things. Ah, (Pause) another English teacher and I try to keep a running list of the, the kinds of topics that will get 'em interested. Because, you know yourself, if you're interested in something you can writer much better than a total foreign sub, topic. Ahm. "My Greatest Fear," "A, A Famous Person I'd Like to Meet," "My Hero." "If I Were President," "The Job of My Dreams." Ah, I've, I've got one--"You're Forty Years Old. Where Are You Gonna Be? What Are You Going To Be Doing? Who Are You Gonna Be?"
Crowley: Where do they see themselves at age 40?
Lewis: Ahm. They see themselves with their own business. With a family and children. Living comfortably. Not rich (Pause) by any means. Some, ah, many of the boys will be retired from the service when they're forty. And they'll go off to a retirement home, Florida or Aspen, Colorado--something like that, with their wife and their children.
Crowley: Very traditional middle class.
Lewis: Very traditional.
Crowley: Do you get a lot of, ah, boys who are gettin their G. E. D. or their high school dip--is it G. E.

D. or high school?
Lewis: It's high school diploma.
Crowley: Straight high school diploma?
Lewis: Right.
Crowley: Who come to get it so they can get in the military?
Lewis: Yes. Most of my boys have a recruiter and are on their way to the military with everything signed up.
Crowley: Do you have any, ah? Do the recruiters put pressure on you to pass their students, their, the boys they've recruited?
Lewis: No. I've never met a recruiter.
Crowley: Never.
Lewis: The one thing I like about the Marines through. The Marines require one more credit of English than any other level of the military.
Crowley: They do?
Lewis: Yeah. There's something ironic about that. I mean, the, the Marines have the macho image.
Crowley: Um hm. But.
Lewis: But I've had to teach more pre-Marine Shakespeare than any other.
Crowley: That's interesting.
Lewis: Yeah.
Crowley: You mentioned one of the topics was their greatest fear. What are their fears?
Lewis: Ah, dying (Pause) is a big fear.
Crowley: Are they living, is it's because of living street life? Or?
Lewis: No. They're still worried about the nuclear war.
Crowley: Really? So they're (Pause) worrying about that.
Lewis: I had them write, ahm, their obituaries.
Crowley: You had them write their obituaries?
Lewis: Um hm. Some couldn't do it. Some could not deal with it because they're sure they'll die tomorrow.
Crowley: And they just break down at the thought?
Lewis: Um hm.
Crowley: (Inaudible) and it's the fear of nuclear war?
Lewis: Um hm. Yeah, not street life. No, not anything on a day to day basis.
Crowley: Do they have, are, are they involved, do your students tend to be involved with, ah, gangs, or groups of?
Lewis: I've had one or two involved with gangs. Ahm, not too many. The ones that--I had one last year

involved in a gang. (Inaudible) OK. Ah, and he ah, he wrote a paper for me on the positive side of being in a gang.

Crowley: What did he show as being the positive side of being?

Lewis: It was his family. It was people that cared about him. Respected him. Told him when he did a good job. Helped him if he had problems.

Crowley: And he didn't get that from home then?

Lewis: And he didn't get that from home. Also a minority.

Crowley: A minority?

Lewis: It might have helped. It might have had some impact on him. It was other, it was men. This is a matriarchal minority and, ah, it was the other boys or men in the group that gave him feedback, that related to him.

Crowley: Were they supportive of his getting a high school, ah, diploma?

Lewis: Never said, actually, I don't know. (Pause) He had me convinced by the end of the paper that gangs were OK. They only took care of themselves and, if they did anything to anybody else it was because they were retaliating for some, some evil that they, that had been thrust on them.

Crowley: The gang?

Lewis: It was his family that took care of him. And he took care of them.

Crowley: That's impressive.

Lewis: Of course, that's also Midwest City. Gangs aren't at quite the level they are in California. But.

Crowley: Not that much crime, apparently. What are they--I, I noticed another one of your topics is what they tend to be thankful for--you ask them to write on that. What are these kids thankful for?

Lewis: Ah. Well, those that have a roof over their head are thankful for that. And that they, they have a job. And, ah, most of them are thankful for their parents. Ah, thankful that they have an opportunity to go to school and get their diploma.--Although that might just be a little bit of trying to impress the teacher for a higher grade.--Ahm, the other thing that goes along with that one is, I ask 'em to write about who they admire the most.

Crowley: Yes?

Lewis: Most of the time it's their parents. The girls write that they admire their mother. The boys write

they admire their fathers. I, I would be surprised--I mean that shocked me--the first time I did that. And I almost don't do that every semester any more because it's so old hat now. They, it's their parents.

Crowley: That they admire the most.

Lewis: Yeah.

Crowley: Interesting. So their parents are still role models for them even though they're not, they haven't done the conventional thing of going to high school and getting

Lewis: Right.

Crowley: A diploma during the day.

Lewis: Ah, many of these parents are single parents at this point, particularly the mothers. Ah, the girls write they admire their mother "Because she raised me and my brothers and sisters alone. She worked hard and tried to give us the best she could by herself."

Crowley: What's the, ah. You, you mentioned the age would be, ahm, seventeen to twenty. What's the sort of the racial mix of your classes?

Lewis: Primarily white.

Crowley: Primarily white. (Pause) Would they be kids who grew up locally or who moved into the area?

Lewis: Local. Yeah. Now most of them are local but there is a lot that their parents are from ah, West Virginia, Kentucky, and have moved into the area. So they talk about going to see grandma and grandpa and it's back in the hills.

Crowley: OK. So they still have that connection then?

Lewis: Um hm.

Crowley: Just as an aside, do you find that they have some hill beliefs that have occasion to pop up in class?

Lewis: Yeah. Some much stronger than others. Um. I've got enough relationship to the hills that I can recognize, ah, phrases they come up with. Ah, if they, I ask them where something is--and one that comes to mind is--"Well, it's just down the road a piece." Ah, I'm used to that from my background but not too many people in Midwest City, as natives, give "Down the road a piece."

Crowley: Or "Over yonder."

Lewis: "Three miles." Yeah. And, ah, and they admire this life too. Most of them want to grow up, get enough money to go to Kentucky or West Virginia where grandma and grandpa live and, ah, build a

house and live there. They don't like the city life. They go back there on summer vacations. They've had experiences as, as smaller children with their par, with their parents going down there. And that's what they love.

Crowley: Switching from students to the teachers, what is, maybe the most unusual, frustrating or whatever event that's happened to you as a teacher?

Lewis: Ahm. Frustrating is when these kids come in and they're seventeen weeks away from a high school diploma and they can't read or write above a fifth grade level.

Crowley: Do you find yourself teaching on that basis then?

Lewis: You have to take 'em where they are to some other point. You can't ask, you can't taken 'em from what, ah, the school system says a senior is high school is. Because they're not there. They can't do anything. It's like throwing someone in, in the water that can't swim. So you've got to take, find where they are and then try, to get 'em to some better point. But you can't, in seventeen weeks, give 'em seven years of school. (Pause) I tried a couple times but that's the frustration.

Crowley: Do, are uhm, do teachers ever lose control of their classes in the night school?

Lewis: Just me.

Crowley: Just you? (Laughter)

Lewis: Just me. The other ones are pretty hard-nosed teachers and, and they, they stay in control of 'em most of the time. The classes are fairly small. Ahm, I lose control usually 'cause I want to. Ah.

(Knock on the front door)

Lewis: Turn it off?

Crowley: Um hm.

(Tape turned off)

Side Two

Crowley: Do you have any more returnees coming to visit you.

Lewis: Yeah. There's one named Larry and Larry is an, well, he's kind of Hulk Hogan looking.

Crowley: Hulk Hogan?
Lewis: Yeah. The ah, the blond hair and all. Large but not huge or anything. But, ah, a dominant personality type.
Crowley: Uh hm.
Lewis: And Larry is probably not the smartest guy in the world but he's, he's got enough brain that he could, he'll bet by and he'll survive. And he started--for about three years in a row--every English class. Shows up for about three or four weeks and he's not doing drugs but he'd just lose interest and quit coming. Ahm. Ah, probably Cs, maybe Bs if he really worked hard but he doesn't work hard. So, he's, he didn't come back this year. But the door opened to class the other night and in walked Larry. And we're five weeks into the semester so it's too late for anybody to be joining classes. Not for this semester. And I was real surprised to see Larry. Came over and hugged me. Always got along fine. Ahm. Larry just came to school to beat up on somebody else. He had a, some kind of confrontation a couple of nights before and he was waiting until the kid got out of class so he could beat him up.
Crowley: (Interrupts) But he stopped?
Lewis: Get everything straightened out. But he stopped to see me because we always got along. And just about every kid that I've had in class the last three years knows Larry. I mean this guy's got a reputation and knows lots of people. Some like him, most don't like him. Ahm, the girls love him. They guys don't like him 'cause he beats up on the guys but he takes all the girls. He's got a million dollar smile.
Crowley: Ah hm.
Lewis: And really can have a real sweet personality. Which is, I think, whey he gets the girls. And Larry come sin, in grungy blue jeans and this long stringy blond hair and boots and just kind of, ahm ambles around and clunks into the seat. Usually when he came in for class he had his girlfriend with him. Now Larry is now nineteen but when he was in my class he was eighteen.
Crowley: Um hm.
Lewis: Larry's girlfriend was a sophomore at Midwest State in computer science.
Crowley: Really?
Lewis: And she was twenty-one and attractive, very well-kept looking girl. Ahm, probably upper-middle

class for the looks of her clothes. And very intelligent. She would come with Larry and, when we were up in the computer room writing compositions on the micros, she would help Larry with the micro. But she would also help me with the rest of the class because she knew the ins and outs of the computer much better than I did. (Inaudible) She was making straight As at Midwest State. Twenty-one years old but dating this ragamuffin kid. Ah, so I think his appear (Laughter) was beyond anything I could really see probably (Laughter). But I'm guessing what some of his appeal was. But the girls all loved Larry. Uhn, and if Larry liked you, you got along marvelously. He'd do anything for you. But if Larry didn't like you he, he didn't mess around. So when he came in the other night I said, "Are you ever coming back to school?" And he said, "Oh, I might when I have time but I'm really working a lot now." I said, "What are you working at?" Well, his dad does ah, dry-wall

Crowley: Uh ha.

Lewis: Construction and has gotten Larry on and Larry is learning the fine are of dry-walling which in itself, you know, is something to learn and develop. Ahm, he's learning how to do--he gave me the term but it's, it's when you spackle the ceilings to make a rough finish on it. He's learning to do that and he's making twelve dollars an hour doing this. Ahm, and that's just fine for Larry. I mean twelve dollars an hour isn't anything to sneeze at. So he's quite satisfied so there's low motivation to come back to school. Because if anything happens to dad, eventually they'll take over the business.

Crowley: That's ah, ahm. The motivation thing you just mentioned. You mentioned that they had middle class ideals, they wanted to go on and they needed to get the high school diploma to do it. Is there, are there any other, I think one time you mentioned to me that a student who was literally living on the street yet still attending, ah, night school. I think it was a girl.

Lewis: Yeah, she was livin on the streets. Ahm, they do it because, much to my surprise, ahm, industry and, and the job market does see some value in that high school diploma. And will pick and chose for jobs based on a high school diploma or not. Also in times of layoffs (Pause)

Crowley: Um hm.

Lewis: Ahm, they will lay off according to educational level.
Crowley: I didn't know that.
Lewis: And I really didn't know it either but in the last--early eighties when we had the last major crunch in the economy and, at least in the Midwest City area there were layoffs and closings. I assumed that perhaps night school wouldn't even go because the people--and most of 'em were working, some weren't--wouldn't have the money for night school. But it turned out that most of them were saying, "If you get your high school diploma, we'll keep you. We'll give you X amount of time to get it. If you don't get it we'll have to lay you off." Or, "Those that are being laid off right now are the ones without the diploma." And, so that set an obvious priority for these people; to get their high school diploma, come back and take the courses. And so they used what money they had to pay for the courses.
Crowley: So. Ah, two things. This is what they would be telling you as to why they were coming back?
Lewis: Um hm.
Crowley: And night school does charge tuition then?
Lewis: Yes. Now, ahm. If you live within the school district which we're a part of, and you are, ahm, do not have a high school diploma, you can come in and get your high school diploma for free.
Crowley: Um hm.
Lewis: Because there's an obligation of free schooling ahm, from the state down. If you live outside of the school district and want either your night school diploma or just classes that will then have your credits transferred back to another school, then you pay for it.
Crowley: So then, most school systems around here don't have night school but maybe would have some sort of G. E. D. thing for adults?
Lewis: Well no. Ah, there's only two of either of those programs in the, in the city.
Crowley: So, in consequence, as you mentioned earlier, you get people from all over the city.
Lewis: Right.
Crowley: And outside?
Lewis: Right. Our, our prices are also considerably cheaper than the other program.
Crowley: OK.
Lewis: Maybe as much as forty dollars a half-credit

cheaper. And for people that are taking several courses, ah, that mounts up. And so they'll, they'll come to here.

Crowley: You mentioned one of the topics I see on your list is, ah, "The Best Part of the Class and the Worst Part of the Class." What kind of response do you get (Inaudible) on that?

Lewis: Ahm. (Pause) The worst part is always the homework. I mean they don't like doing homework. And they always say the best part is the teacher. But, you know. So I don't use that one too much because I, I don't really know if I'm getting the real thing with that.

Crowley: OK. And I think another area that they might write on would be "The Perfect Saturday Night" or so.

Lewis: I haven't tried that one for, for a long time. So that one I don't have too much on that. Ah.

Crowley: What's the one you use the most in getting them to write though?

Lewis: Ahm. The one I use all the time is "Who Are You?" or "Who Am I? And Why?"

Crowley: How do they tend to respond?

Lewis: They, they all. Well, it takes a while to get 'em into it. I have to do some talking after I give that assignment because they'll say, "Well, you know who I am. You know my name." And it's a dialog of "Your name isn't who you are. What's inside? What do you think? What do you feel? You've had seventeen, nineteen years of life. Things have happened to you good and bad. You've encountered people. All this has made an impression and made you the way you are. That's what I want to know." "Oh." Well then the sit and think a long time. This usually takes two classes.

Crowley: Um hm.

Lewis: To, ahm, to work on it. Because, hm, they really do a lot of thinking on that. And I'll get that, ahm, "I'm just a person who wants to live my life. I really don't want to make trouble for people. But I don't want them to cause me trouble. And, if someone causes me trouble, I'll stand up for, for myself and I'll take care of myself."

Crowley: Mm.

Lewis: "And that's all I really want to do. Just live my life and be left alone. And not cause problems." That's usually a big thing with 'em. Because, like I said earlier, most of 'em have been in trouble of

some kind with the school. Even though it could be very minor.

Crowley: Ah ha.

Lewis: Hm. And so they, they. At some level then, marked as a trouble maker.

Crowley: OK. Do you feel reasonably positive about your teaching? Do you feel that you're getting something out of it?

Lewis: Yeah. Ah, I wouldn't be doing it for fifteen years if I didn't. And I say that, "When I don't enjoy it any more, I won't do it." Because I really do enjoy it. And I think I really am making a difference with some of their lives. And making an impact with some.

Crowley: You've mentioned some, ah, but do you have a few more success stories that you would like?

Lewis: Given me time to think about that.

Crowley: Sure.

Lewis: Let me see. Yeah, there's one. This was back several years ago. Ahm, and this was, this was a long shot. It was. Again, this was in the early eighties when people were being laid off. And a, a woman come in that was (Pause) probably mid-thirties. So, she and I were almost the same age. And she had come back because her husband had lost his job. Ahm, this was a white collar worker. Lost his job and she was working--she hadn't lost hers. She was a secretary.

Crowley: Um hm.

Lewis: And they had two kids. And she was trying to keep the family together. And thinking that if she could get more credits and, and ah. I think she had a high school diploma but she was trying to get some more things in English grammar, writing skills, that kind of thing. That she might be, ah, eligible for a promotion. Well, she was very bright and very good and worked very hard at this. But through the course of the semester she would show the frustration of having this out-of-work person at home.

Crowley: Mm.

Lewis: And I know from other experiences this is very difficult for a family. It's difficult for the man that's lost the job and it's difficult for him to, to deal with the other members of the family because of this. Serious depression. Lot of problems. And this man wasn't handling it well at all. And he was also checking her homework.

Crowley: Mmm.

Lewis: Regularly. So that her level in this family ah, diminished to that of the children. And so he treated them as if they had three children. He would sit home all day. He wouldn't do anything. He expected her to maintain her job and still maintain the house. Do all the cooking and everything. And go to school as well. Without any help from him. He was feeling very sorry for himself.

Crowley: Mm um.

Lewis: And she shared some of these concerns and frustrations. And my first line was I, I recommended that he seek some professional help in coping with these things. That together they might be.

Crowley: (Interrupts) Um hm.

Lewis: This for some coping things. Well, he wouldn't go. He insisted that at this point the, you know, the world had kind of tossed him out. It was the world's fault and everybody owed him. And he wasn't gonna make any effort. But things kept getting worse. And, she was very tired because she never had time. He was correcting her homework (Pause) ridiculously. Ahm, he then started finding fault with my teaching methodology. (Laughter)

Crowley: Oh ho.

Lewis: And was telling her I wasn't doing this right and doing that right. Well, while I'm always open to constructive criticism, I didn't see this in that light. And it, and told her blatantly one day that if, if he really had a problem with me "Come and see me." I'd talk to him face to face. And I wasn't afraid of him. And I, I was beginning to sense that there was a physical fear which she had of this man. So we had some conversations. Ah, since we were about the same age and she knew I was single, and I was working, and I was surviving by myself. Without a man, quite frankly.

Crowley: Um hm.

Lewis: They had married when she was very young. And, and he was always there up until now to take care of her. And this was, this was just going down hill. The woman was having. Emotionally, it was a drain on her. Physically, it was. And finally I thought, "This is not something I usually say." But I finally said, "You don't need this guy. He, if he's going to destroy himself, he doesn't have a right to destroy you and your children with him. And if he's not gonna help, get help in any way, get out of

this." And I usually never tell anyone to get a divorce. I mean that, that's pretty drastic and it's really out of my line to do it. But I just couldn't see anything positive coming from it. Well she couldn't survive without him. And I said, "What do you mean? You're the one who's bringing home the money. You're the one that's got any kind of emotional stability at this point. If you're tolerating him, you can deal with the world without him better. Get out of this. Dump this guy," is what I said. So she finished up her semester. Got an A. And she was done and I didn't see her any more. And about a year later I saw her on the bus on the way to work one morning.

Crowley: Hmm um.

Lewis: And I didn't recognize her because she was in a business suit. And, ah, she looked very good and she, you know, got my attention on the bus and, and told me who she was. And I knew who she was at that point. She had divorced her husband and was now administrative assistant to the man she had been secretary to.

Crowley: My.

Lewis: And, ah, was--I think she had doubled her salary and the kids were doing great. She'd had her own townhouse or large apartment and she was great. She said it was the best advice she ever got. It was a long shot on my part but I felt very good about it.

Crowley: Do you find that--that is positive--that other students who, you know, younger ones come to you and ask you for advice on things?

Lewis: All the time. Ahm. Our society is still such that the doctor, the preacher and the teacher are the, the people that are supposed to be the wise sages and know everything.

Crowley: Um hm.

Lewis: And they really do. Ahm, and the first time it happened I was real startled because this person was lots older than me. I was in my early thirties and this woman was in her fifties and come to me for advice.

Crowley: Really.

Lewis: On her husband. You know, while I was--at the time she was almost old enough to be my mother. Coming to me for advice. It was, was kind of a culture shock for me at the time. And I thought, "Why would she think I'd know anything about this?"

But I was a teacher and I'd gone to college. Therefore I know everything.

Crowley: OK.

Lewis: Ahm. Her husband was (Pause) disabled. Ah, from the war. Now at this point if I--it must have been World War II.

Crowley: Yeah.

Lewis: And he had been disabled and she had supported him for the next thirty years.

Crowley: Yeah.

Lewis: And she was coming back to school because the money he was getting, along with what she was able to make in whatever job she did, just wasn't enough. And then the economy, you know, things were getting worse and she needed a high school diploma.

Crowley: Um hm.

Lewis: So at fifty-five you come back for a high school diploma. And there's some motivation there and you have to admire someone who will walk into a class, let alone go through all the hoops. But the husband wasn't coping with this well.

Crowley: Hm hm.

Lewis: Ahm. And this is another whole problem with this. And she was asking me my opinion. Ah. And so I saw that, ah, there's and extra responsibility here when you teach sometimes. Ahm. Because these people ask for advice. It's not just "How do you write this sentence?" It's "How do I live my life?" And it's a little scary but, ah.

Crowley: With the

Lewis: With experience you start giving advice. And them you find out that if you don't give it and nobody else does, these people are, you know, in trouble sometimes. So you think. Well, what you can give is better than nothing. But you learn to be very, very careful and cautious about, ah, the advice you give. Last year a student come up and said, "I'm pregnant. If I have an abortion will I go to Hell? For killing my baby?"

Crowley: (Whistle) Oh my God.

Lewis: Well, you'd think twice before you answer a question like that. I certainly did. Ahm. And then you ask more questions before you give any answers.

Crowley: Do you find that if, if one partner in a relationship is going, ah, to night school, that it's seen as threatening?

Lewis: Yes. I was gonna say this anyway if you hadn't. Ahm. Another time I had a woman--again, mid-

thirties you get housewifes coming back.
Crowley: Yeah.
Crowley: The kids are, at least in school to the level that they're taking care of themselves to some degree. And the wife has some time and she'll come back and get a, try to get a diploma. And this was lower middle class family. So the husband was blue collar of some sort.
Crowley: Um hm.
Lewis: And the, the girl that was coming in, woman, to classes and doing real well. These people always do very well. They work hard. Very conscientious. And they've also learned some things about life so they apply themselves better. And then she started not showing up on a regular basis. And we do have a rule that you have, you can only miss three times in a semester. And finally she came in one night and she said, "Well I'm having trouble coming up with excuses. Ah, I can only go to so many Tupperware parties and I can only go to so many make-up parties. And I said, "What are you talking about?" And she said, "My husband doesn't know I'm coming to school. He forbade me to come to night school."
Crowley: Oh my God.
Lewis: And she says, "Right now my mother-in-law is covering for me." Ahm. The mother-in-law knew it and, and encouraged the woman. But the two of 'em were trying to hide it from the husband.
Crowley: (Whistle)
Lewis: Now seldom is there ever any problem with the husband coming.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: The wife is always very supportive. In my experience. But, more time well--I'd say maybe a third of the time--ah, the woman is coming without her husband's knowledge. Because he doesn't want her to come to school. There's a fear that, if they can, if they know enough, they can better themselves. They'll leave him.
Crowley: OK. And they don't want to be left?
Lewis: Yeah.
Crowley: On the, the first night of class, what do you generally think when you walk in and you look out and see these students, some of whom you know, some of whom you don't?
Lewis: After, after fifteen years I can walk in the class and look at those kids and almost tell you what grade they're gonna end up with at the end of

the semester.
Crowley: Really?
Lewis: And what I have done a couple of times is, ahm, beside their name and some little list, I'll put down a grade that I think their gonna get. And then I pull that paper up and put it away for seventeen weeks and totally forget.
Crowley: (Interrupts) Because you don't want to?
Lewis: Everything. Yea, I don't want to influence anything.
Crowley: Yeah.
Lewis: And then I'll take it out after I give 'em the final grades and I have a pretty high hit on that.
Crowley: Is the, are their certain characteristics of someone who looks like they're going to get a high grade versus someone who looks like they're not going to get a good grade?
Lewis: Um hm. Ahm, it. It, it's almost more body language than it is looks. The way they, they act, the, the way they're sitting there when you walk in. And their hurt--their initial reaction to you. If there's any sense of, ah, of respect or acceptance, then you know these kids are, they're here cause they need that credit. And they're, they're willing to do what it takes to get it. And they'll work accordingly.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: But then there's the body language where they're, they're, ah, sittin' sideways in the seat. Or they're already talking to someone behind them, or it, the arms are folded and, and the message is "Ah. No one so far has taught me anything and you're not gonna to be the first."
Crowley: Oh boy.
Lewis: "You know, I'm here because I have to be. Ahm, and I, I'll make it as tough as I can for you to get through."
Crowley: They're there because they have to be? Because?
Lewis: Well, they still want to graduate. There's still that motivation. But they certainly don't want to do anything to get them a diploma. So they're goin' through the motions.
Crowley: About how many, er, what part of the class will drop out? In a semester?
Lewis: Usually just two or three.
Crowley: And you may have what--twenty students?
Lewis: Yeah, except Speech. We just started Speech

last year and it's got the highest drop out rate of any class. They've got (Pause).
Crowley: They've a fear of getting up?
Lewis: Fear of getting up in front of that class. And that, that's a fear that probably cuts across every strata of society beyond any other fear in the world. I'm convinced of it. They're terrified to get up on front of the class.
Crowley: What kind of things do you have 'em, ah, speak about?
Lewis: Ahm. I start with something they know.
Crowley: Um hm.
Lewis: Ah. This semester I, ah. Well, the other thing I do every first night is I make, make everybody write a paragraph, no matter what class it is, is "Why are you here? And what do you want to get out of this class?"
Crowley: OK.
Lewis: And most, a lot of the time it's "I'm here because I have to have a credit and I just want my credit lady." You know. "Don't bug me." But if I know going in I know what I'm dealin' with.
Crowley: OK.
Lewis: Ahm. If they come out with something that "This class is gonna make me solve world hunger and win the Miss America Pageant," I, that also sends me a real strong message too. And I know that these kids will bullshit their way through every assignment I give 'em. One little girl though, in Speech--this is the one that lived with her boyfriend and was beaten up. Ahm. She said that she wanted to learn to give, to get up in front of a class without throwing up.
Crowley: Wow.
Lewis: Cause the only time she tried to give a speech before she threw up. And I was hoping that she was a real quick learner.
Crowley: (Extended laughter)
Lewis: Real fast. Ahm. So the first time she gave a speech I had 'em, I had her stand real close to the wastebasket just in case.
Crowley: Oh.
Lewis: But she didn't throw up. And so she's feeling real good about herself. What I do if it's a large group.
Crowley: Yeah.
Lewis: Is that I divide 'em into small groups of four.
Crowley: OK.
Lewis: And tney spend a couple of classes talking to

each other and getting to know each other. Because most of these kids don't know each other when they come in. It's not like a regular school where you got the same twenty or thirty-five kids that have been in classes together, you know, ten or twelve years.

Crowley: Yeah.

Lewis: Ahm. These kids, if they know two other people in the room, that's max. And I'll have one or two maybe that do. For the most part they're total strangers to each other. Which puts another layer of things when they come in. Because not only do they have to deal with the teacher but they've got a room full of strangers.

Crowley: And that's trouble so when they (Inaudible)

Lewis: Yeah. And it's even more troublesome to give speeches. Ahm. So they get to know these, these four or five kids. And the first speech, I tell 'em to give me three minutes describing some thing they know.

Crowley: Um hm.

Lewis: So the boys tell me how to build an engine for a Chevy.

Crowley: Ha ha.

Lewis: And the girls tell me how to put on make-up. Well, that's OK. And they only give that speech to two or three other people.

Crowley: Oh, OK.

Lewis: They stand up in front of the room with a podium.

Crowley: Yeah.

Lewis: Ah, and they read from papers or notes. The first two, they're mainly ah. And I'm sitting there and there's only two or three other people in the room.

Crowley: You've sent the rest out of the room?

Lewis: Yeah. I, I'll schedule it so that one group will come in for fifteen or twenty minutes and will do the speeches. And they leave and another group comes in.

Crowley: Do they do elsewhere or just to home?

Lewis: Oh, they just go home.

Crowley: Oh.

Lewis: It's just as easy that way. And so they only give a speech to a few people that they're comfortable with.

Crowley: Ah OK.

Lewis: But that gives 'em the experience of standing

up and giving a "speech," quote, unquote.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: In front of a group. A small (Inaudible). It's much less frightening than a class of twenty strangers. But this still is fear. I had a student last year, this was a man of thirty-two.
Crowley: Uh hm.
Lewis: He got up to give his first speech. And he couldn't talk real well. You could tell his mouth was very, very dry.
Crowley: Yeah.
Lewis: And her started blushing. And he got red. And then he got a little purple.
Crowley: (Laugh)
Lewis: And then it faded to snow white.
Crowley: Oh my.
Lewis: And I said, "Are you gonna be OK?" And he said, "I don't think so." So I had him sit down real fast because I thought he was gonna pass out.
Crowley: Yeah.
Lewis: And, and I understand this fear. We, it's one of the strongest fears I think that exists. I hadn't given it much thought for a long time. But people will pass out over this. And I know because I avoided Speech all through high school from the same fear. I wouldn't take it. And then I had to take it in college and thought I was gonna die. Considered dropping out of college before I gave this first speech. I'd never done it in front of a group before. But I lived through it and then, you know, turned out to be a ham about it. But I understand what they're going through. It's terrifying to 'em. And kids that will, you know, take on three of four in a gang fight.
Crowley: Um hm.
Lewis: Will pass out giving a speech. Or think they're going to. Got the symptoms. I try to get 'em before they do it.
Crowley: Ha ha.
Lewis: No one's passed out yet but.
Crowley: Sometimes they've come close?
Lewis: Sometimes they've come close. It's terrifying. Usually I share my experience with 'em so that they know I really do understand that the. And some of them have tried and flunked Speech in day school. Ah. Because they had to give up, get up in front of a class of thirty-five. Cold.
Crowley: You've obviously enjoyed working with these

students.
Lewis: I do. I enjoy it very much. It, it keeps a perspective from what I do during the day.
Crowley: It gives you a perspective. What else do you get from it?
Lewis: Well, there's a sense of accomplishment. Because ah, they do learn something. Ahm. Some not as much as others. Of course there's a whole (Pause).
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: Spectrum of what they learn. But they do learn things. Ahm. And I think sometimes if they don't really learn the contents of the course, sometimes I'm the first adult that has sat down to talk to 'em.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: And they learn maybe they don't have to mistrust everybody in the world. People will listen to 'em. That what they say is worth listening to. Many of 'em don't feel that anything they say or think has any worth. Because up to this point no one's ever listened to 'em. And so if nothing else, if I've provided someone, some other human being for these kids to listen to, ah, I feel I've accomplished something for them. And made an impact.
Crowley: In the long run, have you found that it's more difficult to make an impact now that you're getting students less - or is it easier to make an impact? Are they more or better prepared? Or worse prepared than others were in the past?
Lewis: I think they're less prepared. Which is real frightening. Ah, it's very sad about that because that's, that's sending me a message about the traditional education system.
Crowley: Have you ever had a, someone who was functionally illiterate in your class? I mean who literally had problems with basic reading and writing?
Lewis: Ahm. No, because we've got another program in G. E. D. And when they come in sign up and the Director talks to 'em and has 'em fill out an application, if that comes up he would see it and put 'em in the G. E. D. class.
Crowley: OK.
Lewis: To do the, the literacy.
Crowley: Is there anything that, ahm. (Pause) If you were going to change the curriculum to make it more appropriate for these kids, what would you want to

do?
Lewis: Hm hm. That's a good question because, ahm, I just did some wheeling and dealing with my administrator to re-write the English curriculum.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: For, ah, next year. I haven't quite started it yet. But, ahm, (Pause). It, it needs to be more, and I, I try to do it on a small basis, individually, within our curriculum.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: But it, it's got to be more relevant to 'em. It has to be. They have to find out that they can learn things that are skills that they're gonna use day to day.
Crowley: Um hm.
Lewis: That they don't all have to go to college too. Usually they're going to learn in English. And English, perhaps has a little more difficulty with that than your math or your science.
Crowley: Mm hm.
Lewis: Ahm. That seems more relevant. Most of my students are going to end up in the blue collar part of the job world. Ahm. It's hard to convince 'em how Hemingway and Shakespeare is gonna be relevant to 'em on a daily basis.
Crowley: OK.
Lewis: But that again is a problem you have in regular school too. With English. I guess it's just a little more immediate with these kids because most of 'em are working.
Crowley: Hmm.
Lewis: Some are going to day school, night school, and working. Most of them are, are working days and going to night school.
Crowley: What kind of jobs do they have?
Lewis: Ah. They're dishwashers. They push brooms in, in ah, stores. They work in garages.

(Sound of other tape record clicking off.)

Lewis: You want another Coke?
Crowley: You might want to pour that one. Let me just, ah.

Side Three

Lewis: (Inaudible)
Crowley: You were talking about the kind of, ah jobs your ah, your students have during the day.
Lewis: Um hm. Very low paying, ahm, types. The, the girls are answering phones at best.
Crowley: Um hm.
Lewis: The boys are sweeping floors, some do some kind of mechanical work. Although they don't have any real training. And so it's only the, the natural instinct boys have on playing with engines that they've learned how to do any mechanical work. Then you've got the twist like Larry that makes twelve dollars an hour working for his father. And you get one of two of those. But most of the time they're within a family business if they're making any money at all. And so, my guess is that if they had to go out and get that job independently to, from another one, they'd start at a much lower level making much less money. The boys are typically in construction and mechanics of some nature, getting a start in, the girls are receptionist or secretary type.
Crowley: Some of 'em with young kids at home.
Lewis: Yeah.
Crowley: You. You mentioned another, er, story regarding throwing up and speaking.
Lewis: Oh. The, the fun thing about this, ah, this little girl who's, ah, had the real fear of the speech and. Before she gave her first speech, when she was still real high anxiety level about giving it. She's also in my other night class. My Composition class which meets on alternate nights from the Speech class. It's the other way you get to know these kids, sometimes they end up in every class and so you see more of them during seventeen weeks then they see of their parents and you see of some of your friends, actually.
Crowley: And so?
Lewis: So you can develop a relationship. But on her first, ahm, composition I wanted them to write about a goal they have in life.
Crowley: Um hm.
Lewis: And where they wanted to go. And her, one of, and her goal was to become a famous person and go around the world giving speeches.
Crowley: Really.

Lewis: To large audiences.
Crowley: Wonderful.
Lewis: And that she would be noted for her great speech-making skills. So it, it showed me that this other class was very important.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: But it also showed the level of anxiety and the fantasies.
Crowley: Oh yeah.
Lewis: That came into play with just this one little thing of standing up in front of a class for three minutes. Then she's going to become a speech, speech maker of the world. (Inaudible)
Crowley: That's incredible.
Lewis: It's interesting. But, but she's feeling very good because she, she made a big first one. And she said that a couple of nights later. We were in the room together and she said, "You know I really thought I was gonna throw up and I didn't." She said, "I really feel a lot better." So.
Crowley: Good.
Lewis: She'll finish her classes.
Crowley: Good.
Lewis: Ah. She has a real meek little voice because she's very shy. So I don't know if she'll become the speech-maker of the world but maybe in her own eyes she will. Ah, that's OK.
Crowley: Now you mentioned Jim there and a few others.
Lewis: Jim is this interesting kid, the one that does the drugs.
Crowley: Yeah.
Lewis: In the fall. Ah. And I don't know, he probably has some theories on, people buy better in the fall. Getting ready for the holidays.
Crowley: (Laugh)
Lewis: Jim's a real businessman. And if this kid had had a different setting, there's no doubt if my mind he would be in college--Harvard, Princeton, something like that.
Crowley: Hmm.
Lewis: At the very least Midwest State. Ah, it's just a sharp kid. Last year when he was in Speech--for a couple of weeks--and I wanted them to give ahm, a convincing type of speech, he convinced everyone that they should buy "Made in the USA" drugs. And keep out the foreign, the South American drug dealers, because they were breaking down the American economy. But American drugs was helping the

American economy.
Crowley: (Inaudible)
Lewis: He convinced me.
Crowley and Lewis: Laughter
Crowley: I won't pursue that.
Lewis: Ahm. Then this year Jim came in and, ah, Jim turned twenty-two just last week.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: So of course when he came into class he was in no mood to be in speech class. He'd already had partied for a while. And his eyes were already glazed over. I can, I know Jim well enough that I know he's high because he gets this strange little smile on his face.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: And a, Jim was smiling. So I know Jim was high, too high to do any work. But that was all right. Jim has had Speech classes before and gets As in speeches. He knows exactly what to do. And one night he got up to do a five minute speech and got carried away and talked for an hour. The other kids were just amazed but he was making sense so I let him go. He wanted to get it off his chest anyway. But Jim came in one night, and a couple of weeks ago, of course, he was twenty-one so he can get in anywhere. He was just really upset. He'd been off to a bar, on the North End, that he'd heard advertised--and people had told him about--and there were supposedly naked women there.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: Well, if Jim had thought a bit, you don't get naked women and alcohol in the same place. It's against the law.
Crowley: Yeah.
Lewis: So they wouldn't have been totally naked. And he got in there--a four dollar cover charge just to top things off. So he had already made an investment. In his eyes. He even used those terms, "I invested four dollars. And these women weren't naked. They had on bathing suits."
Crowley: (Laughter)
Lewis: "They were wearing bikinis." I said, "Well Jim, they wouldn't be naked if they sold alcohol." I said "How was (pause) everything else?" He said, "The beer was real cheap, it didn't cost anything for the beer." He said, "But the women weren't naked." And I said, "Jim you just got to learn. It's a rough life out there. You just can't get cheap beer and naked

women in the same place."
Crowley: (Laughter)
Lewis: He said, "I guess you're right. I just can't do it."
Crowley: Ah.
Lewis: But he was real upset. So he was off on his twenty-second birthday to look for naked women. To heck with the cheap beer. He was willing to spring even more than four dollars for a naked woman.
Crowley: A man with a goal in life.
Lewis: Yes. Jim always has goals. Ahm. He did do a speech the other night. Came in one night and said he wasn't ready to do it because I told him to describe something.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: And he said, "I'm doing research because I'm describing someone." And so I said, "Sounds like an excuse for a hot date to me but, OK. I'll give you another night." So he came in. And part of the stipulation of the speech was, when they described it they weren't supposed to name it.
Crowley: Um hm.
Lewis: They weren't supposed to tell who it was. Not that we were going to guess but I just wanted 'em to be able to use a broader vocabulary.
Crowley: Yeah.
Lewis: Start 'em thinking. And he talked about this guy who had gone out west and was in the mountains, and worked, lived in a fort, and ah. He had all his time frames right, in the eighteen hundreds and everything. And, it turned out that this guy was eighty-five years old.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: And it turned out that it was Daniel Boone.
Crowley: Oh.
Lewis: It was a fascinating story and he gave it really well.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: And it turns out that he's right. I mean this, this kid actually did research and found out about this. So I said later. I said, "You surprised me. I really didn't expect you to get involved in something like this." He said, "I read a lot of history and I like to read about famous men." And he said, "I'll. You pick up real strange stories." He said, "After this guy settled Kentucky and all this. The guy was eighty-five and was out, ahm, scoutin' for calvary and all sorts of things." And he said

somebody in his family told him they were distantly related to Teddy Roosevelt.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: So he reads up on Roosevelt and he got all excited. He said one of his next speeches was gonna be on Grover Cleveland. Now. I wouldn't pick Grover Cleveland to give a speech under any circumstances.
Crowley: Yeah.
Lewis: But for this kid to do it. Said he read a story about Cleveland once, that he was actually a sheriff in a small town in his early days.
Crowley: Um hm.
Lewis: And was also the local executioner.
Crowley: Hmm.
Lewis: If need be but nobody ever needed it. And then one day some guy was, ah, tried and accused of murder or something. And sentenced to hang. And Grover didn't want this on his record cause he knew he would be a great man some day. Paid some other guy ten dollars to hang the guy.
Crowley: Incredible.
Lewis: You know, its a fascinating story in itself but you certainly wouldn't expect to hear it from a drug-dealin' (Laughter) dropout.
Crowley: That is incredible.
Lewis: And he, he says he comes across all sorts of stories. He's just totally fascinated with it.
Crowley: So even when they're, ah, shall we say in illicit enterprises, there's ah?
Lewis: Yeah. Ahm. It's a little bit weird. Just fascinating. Cause every time this kid comes into class he surprises me. I mean I know he's bright and.
Crowley: Hm hm.
Lewis: And everything. And a good personality. Ahm. The other thing. I have one girl in class who is, ah. She's an LD student.
Crowley: OK. Learning disabled.
Lewis: And. Learning disabled. She's twenty-one.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: She's a recovering alcoholic.
Crowley: Um hm.
Lewis: Been dry for about a year. And she's trying very hard to get a high school diploma. She works in housekeeping in one of the local hospitals.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: Mopping floors and what-not. And really is trying very hard. Is, is pretty disabled. Ah. I

don't know if she's gonna get a diploma or not. I don't know.
Crowley: OK.
Lewis: If she has it. Tries very, very hard. Is there early, stays late and works hard. So she's in Speech class.
Crowley: Yeah.
Lewis: And. Ah. She gave a speech. This is a small group this time so they aren't subdivided. But she was in there with, with Jim and two other boys that are OK kind of kids. Kind of an older brothers. A little rowdy but.
Crowley: Yeah.
Lewis: Not bad. Basically nice kids. Ahm. And she got up to give her speech and it wasn't too badly done.
Crowley: Yeah.
Lewis: She gave it a good shot for the first time. Very nervous, very scared. And when the boys gave these speeches they heckled each other.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: And I didn't say anything but was prepared to shoot 'em in the back if I had to.
Crowley: Yeah.
Lewis: Because this girl had never given a speech before. She was terrified. She was physically shaking. She'd, she was holding the podium and it was shaking. And they sat there very quietly through the whole thing. And when she was done they applauded.
Crowley: That's great.
Lewis: And Jim was telling her what a good job she was, was doing. So these kids have real good stuff in 'em.
Crowley: Yeah.
Lewis: You have to admire them for that. And Jim especially. When she sat down he went over and sat next to her. And told her what, what she did good and how she needed to improve on this. And how he was gonna help her. This was out of the blue. This kid has no reason to do anything.
Crowley: That's great.
Lewis: So that's why you're willing to, to deal with 'em when they, they might not be doing other things they're supposed to.
Crowley: Cause their good side comes out.
Lewis: Cause you see the good side of 'em, right.
Crowley: Would you care to describe the room? And the four-legged occupants that are around us?

Lewis: Four-legged occupants? Which first? You don't care? OK. Ah. The room is an attempt to change real middle class in (Laughter) to something with character. Because I moved in three years ago.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: And I haven't done any painting. Ahm. And we had a real nice middle class family living here with three kids. So there's lots of hand prints up and down the walls. And the paint.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: That I didn't supply. Ahm. But the pieces are mine. And, ah, the furniture's pretty typical with a lot of wood. Because I like country and I like the wood effect.
Crowley: OK.
Lewis: And ah. As mother always said, "You could mix and match." So I have lots of different kinds of wood. Some finished. Some unfinished. Ahm. We've got color schemes in blues and oranges.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: With a few left-over from the sixties of the earth tones.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: Although they're coming back so I'm hopeful.
Crowley: (Laughter)
Lewis: Ah. Lot's of, of things around the room. And I've had friends comment, "My God. You've got all this junk in here. Why do you have it all?" Ahm. Most of it has been given to me. I didn't buy most of the stuff. I bought, you know, the couch and the TV.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: But the pictures and the knick-knacks--most of which emulate, emulate cats--have been gifts from other friends that have cats. Or people that know I like cats.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: Cat pictures, cat throws, cat figurines.
Crowley: And two cats.
Lewis: And two cats. Ahm. One's been with me since before I started teaching night school. He's sixteen and a half and is as aggressive as the students of night school. Ahm.
Crowley: And the name of the cat?
Lewis: And he's Archie.
Crowley: Um hm.
Lewis: Ahm. Named after a combination of Archie Griffith and Archie Bunker. They were both famous at

the time he entered the scene. Ahm. Very dominant personality.
Crowley: Um hm.
Lewis: And obstinate and ah. And convinced the world revolves for him. Always. Ahm. And the other one is, is new to me. A couple of years old but I've had him for less than a year. And he's Rocco. Ah. He's supposed to be Rocky. But then I decided that the name is real common these days because we're into Rocky 6 or 7 or something.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: So I decided to give him some ethnic background and made it Rocco. And, ahm. And there was a good family friend
named Rocco.
Crowley: So it fit in.
Lewis: So it fit in. Except the vet keeps spellin' it R O C K O and it's R O C C O. So when I, I had to tell the vets to change the name--they had it wrong--they kind of looked at me like "What makes the difference?" But of course, you know, these cats have as much identity as any humans I know.
Crowley: Hey, let's fact it. They have their own rights. Ahm. There are a few ah, questions for the "Fieldwork Data Sheet" I'll be asking ya. Ah. "Collector" is of course named Bill Crowley. "Circumstances of Interview" is in, in your ah, your living room. Ah, and your name is?
Lewis: Sandra Lewis.
Crowley: And you're in Midwest City (state).
Lewis: Right.
Crowley: Ah. There's nobody else present for the interview.
Lewis: No. Not that we know of.
Crowley: Ha! Where are you, ah, I mean "Place and date of birth."
Lewis: I was born in Bakersville (Pseudonym) (state). November the twenty-fourth, nineteen-forty-six.
Crowley: Ah. What the "Family information" is--"Size of family (names and ages)."
Lewis: You're lookin' at it. I'm an only child.
Crowley: OK.
Lewis: My parents are both still living. Need their ages?
Crowley: If you have it.
Lewis: OK. Mom's seventy-two and dad is seventy-eight.
Crowley: Your "Ethnic heritage" both "(mother's and father's)."

Lewis: Mother is an Italian. Father is Scotch-Irish. Although more Scots I think than Irish.
Crowley: Ahm. Have they been? Ah, did any of 'em come over or their, ah, grandparents or parents come from another country?
Lewis: Hm. Well the ancestry on my father's side can be tracked back to ahm, Colonel (name), the Irishman that came over to help Washington fight the Revolutionary War.
Crowley: (Spells out name)
Lewis: Yeah.
Crowley: OK.
Lewis: No. (Corrects spelling).
Crowley: (Repeats corrected spelling).
Lewis: OK. Ahm. One of my great, great, great, great, great, great grandmothers fought in the Civil War which makes me eligible for the DAR. Well I'm a.
Crowley: Grandmother or grandfather?
Lewis: Grandmother.
Crowley: Grandmother!
Lewis: Grandmother.
Crowley: Fought in the Civil War? Incredible. What did she do?
Lewis: (Laughter).
Crowley: (Laughter). Well maybe we don't want to know.
Lewis: The story is. In print it says," She serviced the troops at Valley Forge."
Crowley: (Laughter).
Lewis: At the time it meant she was a nurse but.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: I've had speculation, given some of my other female relatives, as to what really went on. It was a cold winter.
Crowley: (Laughter).
Lewis: The story has it that she followed her. Her younger sister ran off.
Crowley: Hm hm.
Lewis: To be with her boyfriend who was with Washington.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: In the army. The older sister having more brain went off to get her. But when she got there she thought it, the cause was worth it and, and they stayed and helped as, as best they could and fought.
Crowley: So you are a member of the DAR?
Lewis: I am.
Crowley: So then. Has your family tended to stay in (state) or have they gone elsewhere in the country?

Lewis: Ahm. More or less (state).
Crowley: After the Revolution?
Lewis: Yeah. Mother's side. Eh, mother is second generation.
Crowley: Your mother is second generation? OK.
Lewis: Italian. Yes. Ah.
Crowley: From a large city?
Lewis: My grandmother came through Ellis Island. And they sent money to put her name on the plaque.
Crowley: Really?
Lewis: Um hm. That's a, that's another family story.
Crowley: Now your "Education" is.
Lewis: I have a bachelor's in education and a masters in (professional degree).
Crowley: OK. York State?
Lewis: York State.
Crowley: And your "Occupational experience" during that fifteen years of evening school.
Lewis: Fifteen years of night school. Ah. Eighteen years of management with Midwest government.
Crowley: OK. "Church or religious affiliation?"
Lewis: None.
Crowley: "None." "Membership in organizations other than religious?" You mentioned DAR.
Lewis: DAR. Ah, professional associations.
Crowley: OK. "Special interests, skills and hobbies?"
Lewis: Ahm. I guess my, some of my interest is in the, the education system. Because both jobs have routes into it. Ah. Literacy and education are, are of special interest to me.
Crowley: "Important events during life (civic and personal)?" Things that stand up in, particularly important for you.
Lewis: Important? Ahm. (Pause) I. Hmm. I think in retrospect ah, an important event was getting into that night school system.
Crowley: The night school?
Lewis: I think that has made ah, has impacted on, on the way I see things. There's been good events with my, my career, as far as opportunities of meeting people, being involved in what I consider significant, ah, situations for the profession.
Crowley: OK. Well thank you! I appreciate it!
Lewis: You're welcome. (Pause) I got another three hours home.

(Tape recorder clicks off.)

Crowley: Although we closed there's a final note. How do you feel about ah, being interviewed for ah, a folklore study?
Lewis: Oh I found it interesting. Ahm. Some of the questions made me think about things that I hadn't thought about in years. But as far as recalling the actual situations, I do a lot of reflection in this job. It lends itself to it. And so many times when I'm driving home from school at night I'm thinking all the way home. And when I get home I'm thinking again.
Crowley: Um hm.
Lewis: For an hour or two. Ahm. About these kids and the impact. And what happens. And, and there's a process going on even as I'm teaching because in, in Speech class they're talking.
Crowley: Un hm.
Lewis: And some of the things that they say make me do a lot of thinking. Or the questions they ask. In the composition, what they write. I can't help but think about that because, ah, there's always a surprise even thought you can do a lot of predicting. After this long there's still a lot of surprise elements that come out. Ah, some things are very shocking and very saddening too.
Crowley: Yeah.
Lewis: In what they say. So I do a lot of reflecting in relationship to that job.
Crowley: Have you generally shared these kind of stories with friends.
Lewis: I do. I guess more than, than I do my other job. Because many people that find out I teach think it's fascinating.
Crowley: Um hm.
Lewis: And I'm not sure I understand it because teaching seems very typical and very standard. And, ah. Any time I talk to anyone and mention that I teach, they're very interested in this night school and adult education. Ahm. I haven't thought too much about why they think this. But, ham. But they do and they ask about what kind of people I get.
Crowley: Hm hm.
Lewis: And what I teach, ands what the reactions are. People seem very interested. So I tend to share--not quite as indepth. And I tend to keep some of the more mundane or maybe the gruesome things out of it and just do the positive things for them. Couple of success stories or something like that.

Crowley: Yeah.
Lewis: So they realize that this is a very positive program. And if they're ever asked to support one they, well they feel they can.
Crowley: And people like to hear those success stories.
Lewis: Um hm. Yeah.
Crowley: OK. Thanks again.
Lewis: You're welcome.
Crowley: OK. This is good.
Lewis: Yeah. Think about, if you need to, an interview with Jack.
Crowley: I'll work on that.
Lewis: Because his perspective would be very different because he's not in.

[Tape recorder clicks off.]

Side Four

[Interview begins again.]

Crowley: Is there, or are there any problems with, ah, you know, any racial issues in, in night school?
Lewis: There has been. Ahm. Because most of them, as I said earlier, are white, middle class students. There is still a very, ah, prejudiced attitude among them. Ahm. And from my perspective, ah, an unsettlling, growing prejudice. We haven't come a whole long way in two hundred years as we think sometimes. It concerns me a bit. One of the, ahm, city schools has a primarily black school near our school district. And I get students from this school, routinely. Ahm. Sometimes just one or two. And there usually isn't too many problems there. But in the past on a couple of occasions I've had a large group of black students. Ah, one time I had the wrestling team.
Crowley: The wrestling team?
Lewis: Because the English teacher in this school, ah, a white stu--a white male--had trouble with athletes.
Crowley: Ah ha.

Lewis: Ahm. Didn't see any place for athletic programs in the schools. And initially decided that, ah, none of his students were, none of these athletes, were going to pass his English classes because "Athletes don't know anything."
Crowley: It's incredible.
Lewis: And so for a couple of semesters, couple of years probably--translates into four or six semesters.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: I traditionally got this, the wrestling team and the football team from this school. Now I asked a couple of 'em, you know, "Why, why don't the parents go in?"
Crowley: Yeah.
Lewis: "Why don't they do something?" And one of the answers was, "The administration backs this man."
Crowley: Hmm.
Lewis: "The principal backs this man. And I've got youngers and brothers--younger brothers and sisters--in this."
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: And they don't want to jeapardize what they can do.
Crowley: Yeah.
Lewis: The administration at this time of this school--that was primarily black beccause of the, the desegration issue.
Crowley: Yeah.
Lewis: In the school system. Still had a white administration.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: Primarily white teachers. And so I saw some bad things coming from this. The other story I got, and some of these stories I, I take with a grain of salt.
Crowley: Mm hm.
Lewis: Ahm. Was that this teacher was indeed a homosexual and was involved with one of the members of the administration. And was guaranteed protection.
Crowley: Oh my.
Lewis: Ahm. Which could be true. But I, I only heard that once or twice. So I don't know about that.
Crowley: Are there any problems with, ah, you know, sexual orientation among the night, the students? Or is it live and let live?
Lewis: Ah, no. Again these same middle class white

elements are prejudiced towards minorities and toward the gay or lesbian.
Crowley: OK.
Lewis: Ahm. I haven't had too many experiences with, ah, any lesbian issues.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: Ahm. Again, I think that's common in general. I think that the, the ah, the male homosexuality, for whatever reasons, is more apparent.
Crowley: Yeah.
Lewis: More comes to light. And in the past I've had a couple of students that, ah. At first I never gave it any thought. But then kids say anything they want to.
Crowley: Yeah.
Lewis: And these types of kids are much more outspoken than, than some of the other ones.
Crowley: Hm hm.
Lewis: And, ah. Do some name calling. Like, ahm, say to me that ah, "This, you know this kid is homosexual."
Crowley: Yeah. Hold on.
Lewis: They use much shorter words of course.
Crowley: OK.
Lewis: And, ah. And then you start watching behavior patterns.
Crowley: Um hm.
Lewis: And you think, "Well, you know, maybe or maybe not." Then at other times you see some and you wonder. You don't hear anything but you wonder why they're, they're a little bit out.
Crowley: Um hm.
Lewis: Ahm. And then their, their, ahm, their stories in their compositions are just a little bit strange, a little bit off the wall. Most of them exhibit ah, not only the characteristics but come out in their stories and say they're loners.
Crowley: Yeah.
Lewis: Nobody understands 'em. And if you watch them closely, they're, some of them are struggling.
Crowley: Hmm.
Lewis: With homosexuality. At, ah, sixteen or seventeen very few of 'em are in a position where they're coming out of the closet. This is still very private and, and ah, very trumatic for 'em. They're struggling. And, ahm, they really are outcast if they give any indication at all.
Crowley: Yeah.

Lewis: Of these inclinations by the other kids. Both male and female.
Crowley: Yeah.
Lewis: Ahm. The girls are even more opposed, it seems, to, ah, male homosexuals. Any boy that indicates any tendencies. Or had been branded that even if they aren't.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: Girls are actually cruel. Down right are cruel.
Crowley: Have you, do you suspect any reasons for that? Ah, there goes a potential date lost? Or?
Lewis: No. Ah. I think it might be--what thought I've given to it--the girls again that I encounter are tough regulars. They're street smart. Ah. The pregnancy doesn't have to do it. But because pregnancy crosses, again, all spectrums of society that just is a, a very short unfortunate incident. Which results, you know, in a lifetime of (Laughter).
Crowley: Yeah.
Lewis: Of problems. But again these girls have had to fend for themselves more or less. Single parents. No father image. Ah, the mother has had to become mother and father by being a stronger person. And so these girls learn to be very strong. Very tough. Ah, take care of themselves type.
Crowley: Um hm.
Lewis: And the boys that are, are exhibiting any kind of feminine charactertistcs they see as weak. And they think it's just lack of respect.
Crowley: OK.
Lewis: For the boy, you know. They aren't tough enough. They want macho. The other thing that I'm seeing happening, and it's frightening. Ahm, and I'm not sure that it's a direct spin-off on any of the, ah, the music.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: The very tough rock music that has the violence in it. Ahm, there really is a lot of violence in some of this. But I think it's a real traditional value that in a relationship the man is the superior.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: Thes girls will succumb to the boy friends at any level. Ahm. They give 'em money all the time. Some of these girls are routinely beat up. I mean this is the preliminary to, to, ah, abuse when they get married. Battered wives--they're beaten

girlfriends I think. It's almost like they see this as, as their fate in life.
Crowley: If they're dating a guy he's gonna do it?
Lewis: The, the guy has the right to beat 'em up. Girls come in black and blue. "Oh it was my own fault," she says. "I mouthed off. I said the wrong thing. So he beat me up. I deserved it. " That upsets me greatly. Ah, what, what little feminist I have in me comes out at that point. (Inaudible)
Crowley: How do you react when a girl comes out, if you? What do you do when a girl comes up or she's sitting in class and you see, see that she's, she's battered?
Lewis: Ahm. Well I usually ask.
Crowley: Yeah.
Lewis: Because I'm open enough with my students. I ask 'em anything.
Crowley: Yeah.
Lewis: And I, I get honest answers that way.
Crowley: Hm hm.
Lewis: They'll tell me that they, they hit. And the few things that I react to outrageously, that's one of 'em.
Crowley: Hm hm.
Lewis: And I usually go off yellin', "Nobody has a right to hit you. I don't care if he's your boy friend. I don't care what the circumstances. No one has a right to touch you."
Crowley: Yeah.
Lewis: "You've got to think more of yourself." Ah, they usually do get a lecture from me.
Crowley: Yeah.
Lewis: Ahm. Sometimes some of 'em start thinking.
Crowley: Yeah.
Lewis: But other ones probably dismiss me because I don't know what I'm doing. But they don't care anyway. But, ah, you know, or "He'll leave me if he doesn't beat me." It, it takes a long time to convince anyone that a person they're involved with isn't worth anything.
Crowley: Yeah.
Lewis: Because they see 'em as the sun, the stars and the moon and everything in the world. They're in love. Well none of these kids are in love. They're in lust. But they, you know, they can't live without this person.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: And they'll forsake anything and put up with

anything to keep 'em. And so it, it's not something that you can overnight convince, "You don't need this person. They aren't worth it. You can do better. You can live without this person." I mean you can't do that to any of 'em cause they're all in love.

Crowley: Hm hm.

Lewis: So you have to just give 'em some things to think about. To maybe test it, to see if they can live without this person. I see this happening more and more. And, ah, it's a little frightening. I think it sends a message. When we talked about women's liberation, and equality and everything and supposedly gone so far. I'm not sure in what direction sometimes that we're going.

Crowley: So sometimes the women won't go to night school because their husband or boy friend doesn't want 'em to go. And sometimes when they go, you'll see them beaten?

Lewis: Yeah. And the beatings are happening with the younger kids. These are the teenage girls that I see (Inaudible) Which means there's another generation coming up with pretty much the same attitudes as the older one. Not much of a change for the good as far as I'm concerned.

Crowley: (Whistle.)

Lewis: That, that's one of the frightening things. Ahm. Back a bit to, to the racial issue.

Crowley: Ah ha.

Lewis: Cause I got a little off the track on that. When I did have large groups of the blacks coming in, it was very obvious they would come in and sit together.

Crowley: Yeah.

Lewis: And I would walk in and one side of my class was black and one side of it was white. And there were usually a couple of rows of empty seats in the middle. These are standard classroom size.

Crowley: Um hm.

Lewis: You get thirty-five, forty-five seats in the room and my classes usually don't run over twenty. So there's extra room. There was a very much a division in the middle. Ahm. A certain distance. And they stayed that way. Ahm. And I think the white's made that division.

Crowley: Not the blacks?

Lewis: Not the blacks. The blacks would come in and sit down. The whites would make a choice to sit

away from 'em. (Pause.) And, ahm. Words were never passed. But looks were. There were enough looks in some instances that I put myself between the two groups.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: And made sure that I spent equal time on both sides. I never forced 'em to cross that.
Crowley: Yeah.
Lewis: Because that would just add to it. Ah. These were people who didn't know each other.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: Ahm. And the blacks were very, very quiet. Usually.
Crowley: Yeah.
Lewis: Very passive. Ah. Once they saw me spending equal time with them.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: The relationship with me would develop better. But again, I was white.
Crowley: Right.
Lewis: So that was another strike against 'em so far as they saw. They came out of a white teacher's class who didn't give 'em a fair shot. And here they had another white teacher in class.
Crowley: The teacher was--flunked 'em?
Lewis: Yeah. Just made sure they got Fs. Ahm. So once they saw that I was treating 'em fairly.
Crowley: Yeah.
Lewis: They would relate to me. They would be less passive. Not aggressive but less passive in the class with these white kids. I usually have about two to one, ah, boys in my class. More boys than girls.
Crowley: Hm hm.
Lewis: Ahm.
Crowley: Girls better students? In the daytime or they just don't go to night class? (Inaudible.)
Lewis: There are less girls that will challenge the authority and break the rules to be a discipline problem.
Crowley: OK.
Lewis: Look at the difference between the number of men or women's prisons.
Crowley: Yeah.
Lewis: Ahm. About the same thing. Ah, once the blacks found out though that the white kids didn't know each other.
Crowley: Ah ha.

Lewis: They came even more. Because there wasn't a commonality. These black kids all knew each other. They were buddies.
Crowley: Right.
Lewis: Looked out for and trusted each other. The whites didn't know each other. Now they would band together against the black.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: But still they didn't know each other to trust each other enough.
Crowley: Mm hm.
Lewis: To feel secure. So once the blacks knew that there was a weakness and that the whites weren't a group in themselves--less passive.
Crowley: Did the, do you find that black students and white students, students speak alike or dress alike or do they dress, ah, and speak differently?
Lewis: Um mm. No. Cultures are fairly different.
Crowley: How would the whites dress, for example?
Lewis: Ahm. The whites are in blue jeans. Ahm. From, from my subculture we're, were into cowboys. We're country-western, cowboy hats.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: Jean jackets. Boots. Lots of cowboy boots or heavy work boots.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: Ahm. The blacks--remember, ah, the whites are pulling from a more rural area too.
Crowley: Right. Oaktown and Bridgeville.
Lewis: Gives you the philosophy. Ahm. The blacks are not inner city but borderline.
Crowley: Um hm.
Lewis: Ahm. Upper middle class, maybe. But some inner city because of the desegregation.
Crowley: Right.
Lewis: Are much more, ah, sophisticated clothing. Better clothes. Designer clothes.
Crowley: So the blacks would have more money then?
Lewis: The blacks had more money.
Crowley: And they were?
Lewis: Which I, I know had an impact on this, on the prejudice.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: First of all it's that old thing that "They aren't as smart as we are."
Crowley: Right.
Lewis: And, ah. "So they, they don't deserve to have as much as we do. We're better than they are so we

deserve more." These kids, ah, drove better cars, wore better clothes. Were just cleaner looking, quite frankly.
Crowley: But?
Lewis: Yeah. Ahm. More sophisticated. Came usually from homes that had, ah, two parents.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Louis: Which isn't, isn't that common in the blacks as well but we're, we've got another subculture going here. Successful to the point of maybe two white collar working parents. If not one white collar working parent.
Crowley: And they wouldn't be in this class unless there were, this one English class they, they flunked.
Lewis: Yeah.
Crowley: OK.
Lewis: And all made As with me. As and Bs so you knew that was a real unnatural situation to get them there initially.
Crowley: Is it still the case where they?
Lewis: No. The teacher is, is gone. I'm not, I never found out why.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: But also the administration turned around and is primarily black too. And so there isn't--there might be another set of problems--but there isn't that particular problem going on with a, with a white administration and black students.
Crowley: So you've lost black achievers. Ah, do you still have any black students?
Lewis: Um hm. I still get some in, ah, occasionally.
Crowley: But the upper middle class or middle class students?
Lewis: Although there's only one or two at a time.
Crowley: Yeah.
Lewis: And, and there isn't, you know, there's not the threat now. In fact if there's one or two the group sits as a whole. There's not the break. And it's only when there's a number, a significant number, that there's a definite break. But if you've got fifteen whites and three blacks they'll sit in one group. Because each black will obviously be surrounded by whites.
Crowley: Yeah.
Lewis: They're in the minority. Physically. So it's OK. They're no threat.
Crowley: OK. Interesting. Blacks, ah. Students from

black achieving families, just by purely circumstances.
Lewis: I see another thing happening. This is a real aside. But we get occasionally someone trying to just make up.
Crowley: Yeah.
Lewis: Many of the private schools and Catholic schools in this community.
Crowley: Um hm.
Lewis: Have large black populations. Because once that desegregation hit, the more affluent blacks felt that those kids were not getting enough, a quality education.
Crowley: Um hm.
Lewis: Took them out of public school and put them into the Catholic school.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: Ahm. These kids are getting now a much better level of education from what I've seen.
Crowley: Ah ha.
Lewis: This is based on a very small experiences. But they're coming out better than their white counterparts in inner city schools.
Crowley: The, the blacks in the private schools? The Catholic schools?
Lewis: My question is, "Are we going to have a generation where we have significantly better educated blacks than white?" Which I think is a first.
Crowley: Interesting. It is.
Lewis: Because these kids are going on to big schools or private schools.
Crowley: Because they just wanted to take, to make up a class?
Lewis: Because they've got the educational background and their parents--which are in that, that very small, affluent black subculture--can afford to send them to the schools. They've got the background from their own private education for (inaudible) in our society.
Crowley: And they're?
Lewis: I don't know how big this is but if it's happening in Midwest City with the desegregation it's gotta be happening (Inaudible.)
Crowley: And they happen to be in your adult education class at night just to make up a credit or so?
Lewis: Yeah. Ah, when they transfer, sometimes because the, of the difference in the curriculum, they've

had to pick up something here or there.
Crowley: They generally haven't flunked anything?
Lewis: No. The other thing sometimes is, ah, because of the, the size. They've been closed out of classes. And they need a, they're willing to take extra classes in night school as well as go full-time day so they can graduate on time. And they'll take the credit. So they haven't flunked, just pickin' up extra.
Crowley: Interesting.
Lewis: I'm real, I'd like to track them. I think there's a great scientific study in here.
Crowley: Sounds good.
Lewis: It's.
Crowley: Thanks again. That's great. I'm glad.

(The recorder clicks off.)

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